

JPRS-UCG-84-010

7 May 1984

USSR Report

CONSUMER GOODS AND DOMESTIC TRADE

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CONTENTS

CONSUMER GOODS PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Deputy Minister of Light Industry on Low Quality Cotton Fiber	
(A. Pushkin; SEL'SKAYA ZHIZN', 28 Mar 84).....	1
January, February Figures for Goods Turnover Given	
(Yu. Gryzanov; SOVETSKAYA TORGOVLYA, 17 Mar 84)...	3
Losses Occur in Transport, Processing of Livestock	
(V. Ovcharov; SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA, 21 Feb 84).....	7
Results of Donetsk Meat Processing Experiment Detailed	
(MYASNAYA INDUSTRIYA SSSR, No 12, Dec 83).....	11
Moscow TV Reports Lithuanian Economic Experiment Results	
(Moscow Television Service, 15 Mar 84).....	16
Individual Packaging of Food Would Shorten Lines	
(P. Kondrashov; PRAVDA, 7 Feb 84).....	18
Rising Building Costs, Faulty Equipment Delay Store Openings	
(V. Zubov; EKONOMICHESKAYA GAZETA, No 7, Feb 84).....	21

HOUSING AND PERSONAL SERVICES

RSFSR Minister Interviewed on Consumer Services	
(Ivan Grigoryevich Dudenkov Interview; Moscow Domestic Service, 18 Mar 84).....	23

RSFSP Minister Describes Consumer Services Experiment (Moscow Domestic Service, 17 Mar 84).....	25
Progress, Problems in Consumer Services in BSSR Examined (I Terekhov; IZVESTIYA, 29 Feb 84).....	27
Komi ASSR Consumer Services Minister on Economic Experiment (EKONOMICHESKAYA GAZETA, No 13, Mar 84).....	31
Serious Problems Plague Auto Service Centers (Ruslan Bichev; NEDEL'YA, No 3, 16-22 Jan 84).....	33
Modern Housing Poorly Insulated Against Noise (S. Nikolayev; SOVETSKAYA KULTURA, 1 Mar 84).....	37
CONSUMPTION TRENDS AND POLICIES	
Problems of Rational Consumption Examined (N. M. Rimashevskaya, A. I. Levin; IZVESTIYA AKADEMII NAUK SSSR: SERIYA EKONOMICHESKAYA, No 6, Nov-Dec 83).....	39
Consumers Advised To Temper Demands (P. Nadobenko; RABOCHAYA GAZETA, 4 Dec 83).....	56

CONSUMER GOODS PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

DEPUTY MINISTER OF LIGHT INDUSTRY ON LOW QUALITY COTTON FIBER

Moscow SEL'SKAYA ZHIZN' in Russian 28 Mar 84 p 3

[Article by A. Pushkin, USSR deputy minister of Light Industry: "'Broken Threads'"]

[Text] The article that was published under the title "Broken Threads" on 20 January has been discussed by USSR Ministry of Light Industry. That article deals with the poor quality of the cotton fiber arriving at textile enterprises. One of the reasons is the biological peculiarity of the ASH-25 variety, the existence in it of a bract which, during the primary processing, is crushed and fastens firmly onto the fiber.

Meanwhile agriculture has at its disposal a number of varieties which, on the basis of their technological properties, correspond to the requirements of light industry. They include 9647-I, 9732-I, 8386-V, with the first type of fiber. However, the harvest yield of the ASH-25 variety is somewhat higher and the preference is given to it. Despite the repeated requests from USSR Minlegprom to reduce the areas planted to this variety, in 1984 it is planned to expand those plantings even more.

This policy is by no means a gladdening one for the workers in the textile industry. On their part they are taking steps to reduce the soil content of the fiber. The Central Scientific-Research Institute of the Cotton Industry has developed a special technological process for handling ASH-25, which provides for the repeated cleaning of the raw cotton and fiber. The introduction of this technological process at the Kaakhka Cotton-Ginning Plant of the TuSSR Ministry of the Cotton-Ginning Industry made it possible to guarantee the production of cotton fiber with a content of flaws and weed admixtures within the limits of the admissible GOST [All-Union State Standard] norms. During the current year it is planned to introduce the innovation at all the cotton-ginning plants that process ASH-25.

At the same time it must be noted that repeated ginning has, as the expression goes, its opposite side -- the fiber undergoes fatigue and becomes fragile, breakable, with reduced strength. As a result, the enterprises have an increased amount of waste, an increased number of breakages in the spinning machines, a reduction in the productivity of the equipment, and the thread that is produced corresponds to only the lower limits of the GOST norms. In order to give the workers in the cotton-ginning industry a self-interest in the quality of the output being produced, the workers and engineer-technical personnel are

given bonuses for fulfilling the assignments for the production of cotton fiber with a content of flaws and weed admixtures within the limits of the rated norms.

The question of assigning cotton-ginning plants permanently to major textile enterprises has been repeatedly considered at USSR Minlegprom. Two years ago a plan was approved for the long-term assignment of the largest cotton-fabric enterprises for the delivery of cotton fiber from the industrial associations in the cotton-growing union republics. However, it proved to be impossible to guarantee the normal operation of the textile enterprises working with individual cotton-ginning plants.

The author expresses the idea that the producer of the raw cotton should sell the fiber himself. An analysis of the available data indicates that at the cotton-ginning plants that are under the jurisdiction of the cotton-growing farms, the output of fiber from the raw cotton for a number of recent years has been 2-4 percent less than at neighboring plants in the USSR Minlegprom system, and the fiber considerably exceeds the standard norm with regard to soil content. Taking this into consideration, the ministry does not support the recommendation concerning the transferring of the cotton-ginning industry to the system of USSR Minsel'khoz.

During the current five-year plan a large amount of attention is being devoted to increasing the capacities for the drying, ginning, storage, and processing of raw cotton. As a result the time periods required for processing it for the country as a whole have been reduced by 2-2.5 months, and, for individual oblasts, by 4-4.5 months. The ministry is preparing recommendations for the further reduction of those time periods, the elimination of losses of raw cotton during storage, and the improvement of the quality of the output being produced. The recommendations will be submitted to USSR Gosplan.

5075

CSO: 1827/186

CONSUMER GOODS PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

JANUARY, FEBRUARY FIGURES FOR GOODS TURNOVER GIVEN

Moscow SOVETSKAYA TORGOVLYA in Russian 17 Mar 84 p 1

[Article by Yu. Gryzanov, SOVETSKAYA TORGOVLYA economic commentator, under rubric "Economic Review": "Reinforcing That Which Has Been Achieved"]

[Text] During January and February the amount of goods sold to the public in retail trade and the output at enterprises of public nutrition came to an amount that was 2.1 billion rubles more than during the corresponding period last year. The increase in comparable prices was 4.9 percent.

The trade organizations in state and cooperative trade in February fulfilled the assignments for retail commodity turnover which had been established for the country as a whole, thus guaranteeing the overfulfillment of the plan with regard to the results for the first two months of the first quarter (including an additional assignment for 194 million rubles.

USSR TsSU [Central Statistics Administration] reports:

The commodity turnover in state and cooperative trade in January-February 1984 came to 49.1 billion rubles, including the turnover in consumer cooperatives -- 13.6 billion rubles. The plan for the overall volume of retail goods turnover in January-February was fulfilled by 100.4 percent. As compared with January-February 1983, retail goods turnover in January-February 1984 increased, in comparable prices, by 4.9 percent.

The increase in goods turnover in January-February, as compared with January-February 1983, is characterized by the following figures for the individual union republics:

RSFSR	104.9	GSSR	106.1	KiSSR	104.1
UkSSR	104.7	AzSSR	103.3	TaSSR	105.2
BSSR	104.0	LiSSR	103.8	ArSSR	105.0
UzSSR	107.3	MSSR	106.0	TuSSR	106.5
KaSSR	105.8	LaSSR	103.9	ESSR	103.2

A considerable contribution was made by the workers in state and cooperative trade in the RSFSR. The plan for the first two months, including the additional assignment, was fulfilled by them by 100.8 percent. Trade collectives in Moscow and Leningrad have been working well. They sold, respectively, goods valued at a total of 58 million rubles and 13.6 million rubles in excess of the assignment.

The fulfillment and overfulfillment of the planned volumes of retail goods turnover during January-February, including the additional assignment, were assured by the collectives in the trade enterprises of Belorussia, Armenia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Despite the complicated weather conditions, and particularly the large snowdrifts that seriously hindered the prompt shipping in of commodities, especially to the rural trade network, good results with regard to the totals for the first two months of the year were achieved by the trade workers in the Ukraine.

At the same time, in February there was a worsening, as compared with January, in the work indicators for the trade organizations of Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenia. The two-month assignment for goods turnover in those republics was not fulfilled even in the plan volume without the additional assignment.

The volume of the goods turnover of the enterprises of public nutrition during January-February came to 4.19 billion rubles. That is 152 million rubles more than during the same months last year. The production of their own output by enterprises of public nutrition during the first two months of the year increased by 97 million rubles, or 3.4 percent. The planned assignments for those indicators for the country as a whole were fulfilled: for goods turnover, by 100.7 percent and for production of their own output, by 100.3 percent. The best indicators were achieved by the cookery specialists in Belorussia, Moldavia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

The rates of increase in retail goods turnover in January-February attests to the existence of a favorable market situation for the successful fulfillment and overfulfillment of the planned assignments that were established for the first quarter as a whole. One of the decisive conditions for this is the receiving from the industrial enterprises and the assimilation of all the commodity resources that have been allocated for sale to the public, as well as their additional production. The chief emphasis at such time must be made on the broader use of the capabilities of local industry: in many regions local industry still has considerable reserves for increasing the production of the goods that the public needs, especially the simplest articles for everyday household and cultural use. However, even in the RSFSR with its well developed industry, the public's need for many such goods remains unsatisfied. Of one hundred of the simplest types of articles intended for household purposes, only 74 are produced here. In 1984 the commodities that will be purchased outside the confines of the republic include such items as choppers, fish cleaners, graters, cookie cutters, tea and coffee strainers, dustpans, and washstands. These questions are also being resolved slowly in the republics of Central Asia and the trans-Caucasus.

With the advent of spring, production is reorganizing for the production of articles for the spring and summer season, and trade is preparing for the

organizing of the broad sale of those articles. This requires not only the prompt readjustment of the industrial conveyor belt for the production of those articles, but also the accumulation of the corresponding reserves of them in the trade enterprises, primarily at the warehouses of the wholesale organizations, in order to provide for sorting them into the different varieties.

However, in many republics and oblasts the enterprises in industry are not completely satisfying trade's production orders for articles for the spring and summer needs, and are making the proper settlements with the trade organizations that have been stipulated by the delivery contracts, and are in debt to the public for a large quantity of the articles that they need. This is putting the trade organizations in a difficult situation, since it threatens to result in the failure to satisfy the customers needs during the season that is beginning and in the nonfulfillment in March of the plan for retail commodity turnover. The strictest measures must be applied to this suppliers. The ministries of trade in the union republics and their wholesale organizations must immediately take steps in the outlying areas to obtain the commodities in the complete volumes that have been stipulated by the plans and contracts.

The largest amount of undershipment applies to articles in light industry. The enterprises in this branch in January and February failed to fulfill the plan for production and undershipped to the trade organizations sewn garments with a total value of 100 million rubles; knitwear, 61 million; and fabrics of all types, 147 million rubles.

Trade is being seriously disrupted by the wholesale organization of USSR Ministry of Fishing Management. During the past two months they underdelivered approximately 50,000 tons of fish and approximately 60 million cans of fish.

The trade organizations must take under their special supervision the fulfillment by industry of the assignments for the delivery of the entire products list for the necessities of life and other articles in mass demand in the established variety and appropriate quality.

In a number of republics the trade organizations accept from industry various commodities that are not popular with the public. This is attested to by the increase in the commodity reserves. There has been an especially significant increase in them in Turkmen, Moldavian, and Kirghiz Union Republics.

An important condition for the successful fulfillment of the established assignments for the development of retail commodity turnover is the steady improvement of the forms and methods of organizing the sale of commodities, primarily the further specialization of the trade network and the concentration of the sale of technically complicated commodities. Unfortunately, this work is not being carried out at the proper level everywhere.

The inspection that was recently conducted in Kirghiz SSR revealed a large number of serious shortcomings in the organization of trade, the specialization of the trade network, the development of the material-technical base of trade, and in the delimitation of the zones of activity of individual trade systems. These shortcomings have had a detrimental effect upon the condition of the trade

services provided to the public and the sale of commodities. It is necessary to take all steps everywhere to achieve the complete fulfillment of the programs for the complete increase in the efficiency of trade and the improvement of commodity advertising.

The volume of retail goods turnover, including the additional assignment, has been established for March at 27.8 billion rubles, with an increase of 4.2 percent. In order to fulfill that strenuous assignment it is necessary for every labor collective to achieve the development of the positive results that were attained during the past two months, and where there has been an under-achievement, to compensate for it in the most rapid manner, mobilizing the existing reserves for that purpose.

The year's task is to guarantee retail goods turnover in the volume of 322.5 billion rubles. In March the goods turnover must come to 27.8 billion rubles.

5075

CS0: 1827/186

CONSUMER GOODS PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

LOSSES OCCUR IN TRANSPORT, PROCESSING OF LIVESTOCK

Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 21 Feb 84 p 1

[Article by V. Ovcharov, SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA correspondent, Cheboksary:
"With Everything at a Loss: Why Malfunctions Arise in the Meat Conveyer"]

[Text] SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA has repeatedly reported serious deficiencies in the reception and processing of cattle forthcoming from kolkhozes and sovkhoses. The RSFSR Ministry of the Meat and Dairy Industry has informed our readers of measures taken. However, as before, new facts are coming to light in this matter concerning decisions not thought out, lack of initiative, and lack of economy. Today our correspondent recounts how and why malfunctions arise in the meat conveyer.

My journalistic assignment took me to the Gornomariyskiy sovkhos "Sila". In recent years it has been on the rise. I called at the office in order to congratulate I. A. Ryzhkov, the director of "Sila" and a longtime acquaintance of mine, on the fulfillment of its obligations ahead of schedule.

The farm's collective has been working well. The cattle-breeders alone have sold more than 100 tons of meat in excess of the plan. And there still remained a whole month before the beginning of the year. Knowing this collective, there could be no doubt that a large supplement of both milk and meat in excess of the plan would follow. Contrary to my expectations, I found Innokentiy Aleksandrovich worried and gloomy. Upon hearing my congratulations, his face brightened only for a moment. "What's happened?" I asked.

"What's happened is that there is plenty of meat," Ryzhkov said with bitterness in his voice. "We now have calves weighing 450 kilograms. Approximately 100 head could be turned over in the first quarter, but no one will take them. The slaughterhouse in Koz'mdem'yansk is overloaded. I called the meat combine in Cheboksary--they didn't want to hear about it: they have enough to do themselves. I called Yoshkar-Ola, and they turned us down. We aimed to overfulfill the plans and to liquidate our debts from past years, but now, when we have managed to resolve the task set for us, we've discovered that we've been working to no purpose.

"We've instead begun to explore various ways out of our difficulties and have weighed our options--everything has turned out to involve substantial losses. And not just for the sovkhos. Let us say that it is possible to hold these fattened calves and turn them over in a month or two. But then the state will get from the farm almost 35 tons less meat than has already been produced. This is why. We will have to feed the cattle that are kept back without any substantial return. This unnecessary expense of feeding will raise the cost of the meat. In addition, there will be nowhere to put the younger animals scheduled for fattening. Again we will take losses.

"Let us assume that we manage to force the Yoshkar-Ola meat combine to take our calves for slaughter. In that case, the losses will be somewhat curtailed, but nevertheless cannot be completely avoided. We would have to transport the cattle by a long circuitous route, inasmuch as the local ferry across the Volga is not operating and the road is not frozen. Such a long trip would result in the loss of a minimum of 12 to 15 kilograms per calf. The sovkhos's specialists have calculated that from long trips alone the sovkhos lost some 13 tons of meat in 1983. It was a loss for the sovkhos, but also a loss for the state."

We are not talking about trifles here. If we take the farm's calculations as our basis and apply them to the entire Gornomariyskiy region, it turns out that from here alone no less than 170 to 200 tons of meat production do not reach the state counter because of losses during transportation.

Here's how a generally-known problem took an unexpectedly sharp turn. While adequate weights are obtained in the fattening of cattle and in meat production, it is still important to organize production intelligently and economically, to maintain it during transportation, and to make better use of it during processing. This ancient truth unfortunately is still often forgotten. Moreover, questions of the interaction of the links of the meat conveyor have not been finally resolved.

The production and processing of agricultural commodities is a complex task. Consequently, the resolution of its also requires a corresponding approach. Otherwise, unexpected malfunctions cannot be avoided. Let us take this same Gornomariyskiy region. Previously, its meat combine, small but nearby, was in the center of the region, in the town of Koz'modem'yansk. However, in the course of building the Cheboksary GES, since it was in the part that would be covered by the waters of the future sea, it was simply liquidated instead of being moved to another spot. Hence, one of the largest meat-producing regions in the Mari ASSR, in addition to being cut off from the rest of the autonomous republic, has been left without its necessary meat-processing base. For the time being, due to quick thinking, a branch of the Yoshkar-Ola meat combine has been set up, but it has only a small slaughterhouse. The Gornomariyskiy farms must truck their cattle more than 100 kilometers to Yoshkar-Ola or Cheboksary, or 300 kilometers to Gor'kiy.

Other regions of the Mari ASSR also experience similar difficulties. Thanks to the measures taken by party and soviet organs of the autonomous republic and to the efforts of cattle-breeders and agriculturalists, meat production has

grown considerably in the 11th Five-Year Plan. By way of illustration, in 1983, with the plan calling for 56,000 tons of meat, almost 60,000 tons were sold, but the processing capabilities practically stayed at the old level.

What are they? The main meat combine in Yoshkar-Ola processes 65 tons a day, and the two in Sernur and Volzhsk process 15 tons a day. It is not hard to calculate that, taken together, they are capable of taking care of slightly more than half of what the cattle-breeders deliver. Of course, one could still regard the Koz'modem'yansk slaughterhouse as in the active processing balance. Greater hopes are placed in the meat combine of the fur factory of the association "Mariy el", which has partially begun to process pork in addition to mutton. Let us also add such a probability. But the disproportion that has come about is still not eliminated.

In the meat industry association, plans are being prepared for a new combine that will process 100 tons of meat per day. Talks are being conducted regarding its construction. Of course, it is necessary to build it, but that is a matter for the future, so to speak. But what about today? Are there any reserves here?

Of course there are. The first and most accessible, without special expenditures, is organizational. What is in question here is the planned procurement of cattle and its efficient delivery to the slaughterhouses of the meat combines. Today, when the production and processing of livestock commodities are in the hands of an agro-industrial complex, such a task is fully solvable. However, up to now this has not been done.

I was told in the Mari-Turekskiy and Avenigovskiy regions that in the last months of quarters, kolkhoz trucks loaded with cattle for delivery have to stand in line at the gates of the meat combine for several days. But with an intelligent, well-thought-out organization of the business, long lines could be avoided. The use of this reserve is basically stipulated by a government decree. In the neighboring Chuvash SSR, for example, having been guided by the same decree, the meat industry association has established a procurement service, the responsibility of which is to ensure the scheduled delivery of cattle to the meat combines. The arrival of calves and pigs at the slaughterhouse here is strictly according to a schedule agreed on in advance.

Reception of cattle and poultry at the meat combines that is exactly scheduled by months, days, and hours facilitates work production rhythm and guarantees the safety of products and an end to losses, since there are no long lines at the combine gates. Having resolved this task, the Chuvash processors have gone further: they have begun organizing centralized transportation of cattle from the farms. For a start, they have taken the multi-farm pork production enterprises "Druzhba" of the Kanashskiy region and "Kommunar" of the Tsivil'skiy region, then added several large sovkhoses. Last year some 10,000 tons of meat was delivered to the meat combines by centralized transport. To it are already linked nine multi-farm enterprises and four sovkhoses that specialize in fattening cattle.

Of course, this is only the first step. The advantage of centralized transport promise more both to the rural farm and to the processing industry. We are speaking not only of curtailing losses in livestock commodities and of considerable savings in fuel through shipments by specialized transport, but of the formation of a new agro-industrial type of interrelations of contiguous branches of the national economy and of a new, progressive form of production collaboration.

The Central Committee of the party demands from all branches of the national economy better coordinated work, initiative and business-like efficiency in practical matters, and a persistent increase in the employment of available agricultural potential. As we see, all do not yet feel their high responsibility for this.

12462

CSO: 1827/165

CONSUMER GOODS PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

RESULTS OF DONETSK MEAT PROCESSING EXPERIMENT DETAILED

Moscow MYASNAYA INDUSTRIYA SSSR in Russian No 12, Dec 83 pp 1-3

[Article: "Broad Dissemination of Advanced Experience Urged"]

[Text] Guided by the decisions of the 26th CPSU Congress and the ensuing CPSU Central Committee Plenum, the collectives of the Donetsk Meat Industry Production Association enterprises have set measures to increase production efficiency and work quality during the 11th Five-Year Plan and are achieving them successfully.

Total production volume in 1982 expanded by 1.7 million rubles compared to 1980, and the plan for volume of production of goods was fulfilled by 102.5 percent in 9 months of 1983, amounting to 351.5 million rubles.

During 1981-1982 and 9 months of 1983, 5,600 t of sausage products and 2,900 t of semiprocessed meats in excess of the plan were produced. Meat product supplies were increased by 33,000 t. Output of products that are in demand by the population--wieners, boneless semiprocessed meats, meat and potato cutlets, etc.--is growing at a high volume.

The collection of blood, and utilization of bones and category 2 by-products for food purposes has expanded considerably. During 1982, 3,000 t of edible blood has been salvaged, or 104.2 percent of edible supplies; bone utilization for food purposes was 79.5 percent, that of category 2 by-products was 91.8 percent compared to food supplies; and for the 9 months of 1983, the respective percentages were 105.2, 79.5 and 92.5 percent.

Work is going on to improve the variety of prepared foods. Production of new forms of sausage products grew from 4,800 t in 1980 to 11,800 t in 1982, and their share in the stock of sausage products amounted to 12.5 percent (10.4 percent on the average according to the UkSSR Ministry of Meat and Dairy Industry). Over the 9 months of 1983, the production volume of new kinds of sausages was 13,600 t as against the planned 8,700 t (171.3 percent over the first 9 months of 1982).

The variety of sausage products for feeding children of different ages was in excess of 25 varieties during the past period of the 11th Five-Year Plan (top-grade Gulliver boiled sausages, children's top-grade dairy sausage, Grade 1

school brand, etc.; children's top-grade Malysh wieners; top-grade beef ham for children); for 1982 this varied selection amounted to 7,300 t as against 6,400 t in 1981, and similarly 7,300 t for 9 months of 1983 compared with 5,400 t for the same 9 months of 1982.

The yield of finished goods from 1 ton of processed raw material has grown significantly, casting 2,393 rubles in 1982 as opposed to 2,355 rubles in 1980, and 2,362 rubles for 9 months of 1983; correspondingly, the profit per ruble on sold products increased from 10.9 to 11.6 kopeks, and the return on sausage products production grew from 16.6 to 18.5 percent.

The association has been the winner repeatedly in All-Union and Republic socialist competitions, and in 1982 the Makeyevka Meat combine, which is part of the Donetsk Association, was awarded the Red Challenge Banner of the CPSU Central Committee, USSR Council of Ministers, AUCCTU and the Komsomol Central Committee, and was entered on the Board of Honor at the USSR Exhibit of Economic Achievements for attaining the highest and stablest indicators in the All-Union socialist competition for a fitting celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the USSR.

The Red Challenge Banner of the USSR Ministry of the Meat and Dairy Industry and of the Food Industry Workers' Trade Union Central Committee has been awarded to the association for its operating results during the first quarter of 1983 and to the Donetsk Meat Combine for its operating results during the second quarter of 1983. The Donetsk Production Association of the meat industry has accumulated valuable experience in raising its product quality, especially that of sausage manufactures. In recent years much work has been done in perfecting the technology of sausage production and the adoption of modern technological equipment.

At all association enterprises, processes for sausage-meat preparation are highly mechanized; mechanized production lines have been adopted for making liver and blood sausages from raw material, using AVZh [not further identified] installations (at the Donetsk, Artemovsk, Ahdanovsk, Krasnoarmeysk and Makeyevka meat combines), L5-FAL automatic machinery for processing cooked sausages, and thermo-assemblies with remote automated temperature-control systems for hot-processing of sausages.

At the Makeyevka Meat Combine, a mechanized production line has been introduced for the manufacture of ham products; it was developed and produced by UkrNIImyasomolprom [Ukrainian Scientific Research Institute of the Meat and Dairy Industry].

Realization of measures for mechanization and automation of production processes has made it possible to improve sausage product quality, especially for cooked varieties, by improving sausage-meat processing and market appearance of the finished products, and to free-up 132 employees from the sausage industry in 1981-1982.

Much attention is devoted to increased monitoring of conformance to production discipline.

An integrated product quality control system has been adopted at all enterprises and by the association's personnel.

Standards developed for the enterprise regulate organizational, technical and economic measures insuring full control over technical processes and quality of product output at all manufacturing stages--from receipt of raw material to sale of final production.

The implementation of KSUKP [Comprehensive System for Product Quality Control] not only improved meat product quality considerably but also contributed to growth of the collectives' creative activity in developing new purposive methods of influencing all aspects of economic activity, and made it possible to achieve savings on the order of over 1.5 million rubles for the years 1980-1982.

Developing and perfecting the KSUKP, the Donetsk meat combine in 1982 introduced the comprehensive system for product quality control and the system for efficient resource utilization (KSUKP and EIR). When KSUKP and EIR functions are achieved, besides improving product quality, other problems are resolved: increase in labor productivity, improvement in utilization of basic production funds and fuel/energy resources, reduction in raw and other materials per unit of production and the resultant increase in the volume of high-quality meat-product production.

A unique feature of KSUKP and EIR is the fact that with the control of production quality and efficient resource utilization, technical, organization, socioeconomic and political-educational measures are carried out in an integrated fashion at all stages of production.

Psychological and economic incentives are given for attaining the most important planned indicators for production volume, product quality, growth in labor productivity and efficient resource utilization; it all depends on the coefficient of work quality. The quality of work of laborers, engineering-technical staff and office force is evaluated daily in all plant sections.

Adoption of the brigade form of organization and work incentives plays a big role in raising product output quality and maintaining its stable level. At the present time 86 brigades have been created in the association sausage departments; 74 of them have 1,416 members, or 89.1 percent of the total number working in sausage production. The teams allot the piecework supplement and bonus according to KTU [coefficient of labor participation].

In order to correlate the work quality coefficient with the coefficient of labor participation, a labor coefficient has been introduced that reflects the quality of work done by each worker and his individual labor participation in the results of the brigade's collective effort.

Also included in the integrated brigade are workers engaged in repairing equipment assigned to the particular brigade. Organization of integrated teams has had positive effects on the operation of repair services: they have become interested in doing preliminary work for impending repairs and timely

preparation of needed materials and spare parts, all of which has considerably shortened the time required for repair jobs and improved their quality.

The statute on piece-plus-bonus and time-plus-bonus systems of remuneration by which economic incentives of workers, engineering/technical staff, and personnel is provided for the output of high-quality production is in force at the association enterprises. Thus, workers engaged in sausage production get bonuses from the economic stimulus fund for manufacturing and delivering products with an "excellent" rating on the first claim (10 percent of the set rate for 100 percent sausage product output in relation to total output rated "excellent").

One of the effective forms of effort for improving quality is having oblast exhibitions-and-contests for quality of sausage products, as well as workshops and schools on the advanced experience of specialists and workers in leading occupations, with all enterprises of the association taking part in them. A contest-exhibit for mass-production cooked-sausage products was held in 1982-1983; a contest-exhibit for liver and blood sausages, as well as studies of state-of-the-art experience for work of meat boners, sausage product molders, etc. The Donetsk, Makeyevka and Zhdanovsk meat combines repeatedly carried off the prizes both at republic and at All-Union contest exhibitions for sausage-product quality.

Systematic work is carried on in the association of selection and placement of cadres and the consolidation and advancement of their professional competence. From 1976 to 1982, the proportion of specialists with higher education rose in the sausage industry from 25.9 to 60.7 percent of the total number of engineers, technicians and employees.

The Donetsk Meat Combine Occupational and Technical School trained 667 workers in basic sausage production occupations during 1976-1982: boners, meat trimmers, sausage product molders.

By means of individual and brigade training, 173 new workers were trained and the skill-level of 1,115 persons was raised. The qualifications of 62 engineers, technicians and office employees in sausage production were raised at educational centers of the UkSSR Ministry of the Meat and Dairy Industry.

One-hundred thirty-six instructors are working in the sausage industry, 51 of them individuals with a higher education. As a result, among the 286 young workers with whom the instructors work, there have been no instances of violation of labor and technological discipline over the last 3 years.

Social and living conditions are improving: new recreation buildings have been built at the Donetsk and Artemovsk meat combines, as well as lunch rooms at the Makeyevka, Artemovsk and Donetsk meat combines; on the Azov seacoast, a vacation center has been developed for 310 people, as well as a Pioneer camp for 150 children, and a second 150-person Pioneer camp section is being constructed.

As a result of the efforts to stabilize cadres, labor turnover in the sausage industry has declined from 7 to 3 percent in the course of the last 2 years.

Work carried on in the association has enabled the output of top-grade sausage products in 1982 to account for 52.4 percent of the total inventoried sausage production, or 1.3 percent higher than the average according to the UkSSR Ministry of the Meat and Dairy Industry, while the corresponding percentages for the first half of 1983 were 56.2 percent, or 4.3 percent higher.

The Collegium of the USSR Ministry of the Meat and Dairy Industry recommends that the union republic meat and dairy industry ministries disseminate widely the experience of the Donetsk Meat Industry Production Association in the output of high-quality sausage products. This is based on the organization of a clearly-defined operation of the overall quality control system over the products and efficient resource utilization, adoption of the brigade form of labor organization, improvement of equipment and technology, and increasing cadre skills.

Widespread introduction of experience of the Donetsk Meat Industry Production Association at enterprises of this branch will make it possible to improve product quality and raise production efficiency.

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12577

CSO: 1827/136

CONSUMER GOODS PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

MOSCOW TV REPORTS LITHUANIAN ECONOMIC EXPERIMENT RESULTS

LD182108 Moscow Television Service in Russian 1530 GMT 15 Mar 84

[From the VREMYA newscast]

[Text] The word experiment is in frequent use today at the (Kaunas Yesya) decorative ceramics works, which, along with all of Lithuania's local industry, switched to a new form of management at the beginning of the year. Additional measures envisaged in the experiment to strengthen the interest of enterprises in using waste products and local raw materials have led to the fact that almost all of the goods produced by the works are manufactured from cheap and easily accessible local raw materials, from red clay, quartz sand and bone. (Nine shots of personnel at work making pottery.) Taking into account the wishes of clients, the works is planning this year to master the production of 100 new types of goods. Most noteworthy is the fact that the works has mastered production of items made of bone china, which are much cheaper than items made of solid china, and obviously are not inferior in quality.

What are the first steps in the large-scale experiment involving Lithuania's Ministry of Local Industry?

[Begin video recording] [Brazauskas, Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee Secretary] This ministry has its own particular features. First of all, the enterprises are small and are of a comparably low technical level of production. On the other hand, about 2,500 products are produced, beginning with furniture, devices, consumer devices, and ending with souvenirs. The Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee economic organizations have made great preparations. Enterprises have adopted counter-plans for additional increases in production volume. The accelerated development of production of goods from local raw materials and waste products has been mapped out. As we have seen at the (Yesya) works, great explanatory work has been carried out.

(?Checking) our steps with the chief aim of the economic experiment, we can say that the Ministry of Local Industry and all of its enterprises have coped, for the most part, with the assigned tasks for the month of January. The production of goods with the state quality mark has sharply increased--by approximately 33 percent. The strict marketing of produce according to contracts is

the main evaluation index, according to the conditions of the experiment. Unfortunately, the ministry failed to cope with these indices by only a small margin. But, all the same, four enterprises have failed to meet targets according to this index. We have effectively reviewed the activities and results. Both individual enterprises and the ministry as a whole have adopted corresponding measures, and believe that in the near future the results should improve. Decisiveness, the use of all conditions of the experiment, are undoubtedly the basis for better work. [end video recording]

As was reported to our correspondent at the Lithuanian Ministry of Local Industry, at enterprises under the new conditions, the growth in the volume of production compared to the same period last year was 8.5 percent, while the rate of growth of labor productivity has almost doubled, to 8 percent. [shots of map of Lithuania]

CSO: 1827/188

CONSUMER GOODS PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

INDIVIDUAL PACKAGING OF FOOD WOULD SHORTEN LINES

Moscov PRAVDA in Russian 7 Feb 84 p 3

[Article by P. Kondrashov, first deputy, USSR Ministry of Trade, in column "Trade": "Where Does the Line Begin?"]

[Text] Certainly, everyone knows the feeling of wearisome waiting while the clerk at the food store cuts off something, pours something, weighs and, finally, wraps the purchase. Specialists have calculated that in big cities, people waste about six hours per week in visiting the retail business network. If one takes into account that, on the average, a family annually budgets 550 hours for shopping (of which 70 percent is needed for purchase of food), it becomes clear how advantageous it would be to clerks and customers of stores to expedite service to purchasers. How can this be done?

The main way is the universal introduction of the self-service method. By this means, it is possible to place more than 30 percent more goods in the salesroom than in stores using the usual technology, and, first of all, considerably increase the capacity of the enterprises. Their turnover volume calculated per square meter is double that in stores using the traditional forms of operation.

However, in spite of the indisputable advantages of self-service, only 47.5 percent of the total volume of food products entering into state commerce has been realized with its help for the people. Further development of the modern method of operation is restrained because of insufficient production by the packaging industry. Therefore, today the amount of granulated sugar packed predominantly by hand in back rooms of stores is 7.4 times greater than in industry; for animal fats and groats, it is 2.2 times greater, and for flour, 1.3 times greater.

According to USSR Central Statistical Administration data, sale to the people of packaged goods through the retail network is extremely low. Thus, in 1982, 28.3 percent of packaged production came from industry. And without taking into account the supplying of canned foods, mineral water, soft drinks and yogurt products (which can be marketed only in packaged form and cannot be repackaged), the value of goods packaged at industrial enterprises is actually less.

For comparison I shall note that in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and the GDR, up to 80 percent of food products is sold in factory packaging and only an insignificant part of them in unsorted form is packaged in the trade itself.

The concentration of the packaging of goods predominantly at industrial enterprises enables highly efficient equipment to work at full capacity and creates the possibility for optimum organization of production and the best use of fixed capital. The labor productivity of workers employed in packaging at plants and factories is five times higher than that of clerks in trade. In addition, the total requirement for packaging materials is almost halved.

Calculations show that in shipments to the retail network, 60-70 percent of all products is in the packaged form forecast by the Food Program, and the national economic effect reaches 250 million rubles per year! To this it should also be added that shipments of products wrapped in industry enables so-called natural shrinkage to be eliminated in many products.

If, let us say, factory packaging of loose products is imposed, the annual economy from reduction of natural shrinkage comprises more than 35,000 tons of macaroni products, flour, groats, granulated sugar and salt. In addition, the use of packaged products permits the best type of organization of their display and advertising, improvement in the study and forecasting of consumer demand, and economically valid determination of product consumption.

An increase in the output of packaged goods in 1990 up to the level forecast by the Food Program sharply raises the throughput capacity of stores. The production of packaged goods enables the wide introduction of an industrial system of freight traffic based on transportation of all products in tare equipment from manufacturer to the stores. The new technology of trade conditionally releases 26 men (calculated on 10,000 rubles of production achieved) of which 4 are in industry, 3 in transportation and 19 in the service sector itself.

Why, then, with the obvious national economic effectiveness, cannot industrial enterprises satisfy the demand today of trade enterprises for packaged food products? Basically, it is because of a lack of special equipment and packaging materials. The importance of the matter requires that the USSR Gosplan turn its attention to these problems. But it does not always have an efficient workload or a machinery park. For example, the capacity for production of packaged baked goods at the Bolshevik factory in Moscow is only 75 percent used. But the total volume of production is packaged at the Druzhbinak, Cherkassk, Volokonovsk, Krasnoyarsk, Primorsk and other USSR refineries.

In plans for efficient use of raw material and more complete satisfaction of popular demands for food products, the problem of the output of products in small packages merits special attention. Most foodstuffs are now packaged in only two sizes: 0.5 and 1 kg. by weight. Industry supplies more than 5 billion conventional jars (or more than 50 percent of the total output) of garden vegetables--pickles and tomato preserves, vegetable and fruit juices and tomato paste--in a container from 2 to 9 liters by volume. Studies show that in families having three or four members (not even mentioning smaller families), the contents of 3-liter jars of products, as a rule, are not used completely and are partially wasted.

It should be noted that there are now no problems whatsoever in providing food combines with 200-gram jars. On the other hand, in a number of places, trade organizations experience difficulties in delivery to their industrial enterprises. And at the same time, approximately up to 10,000 tons of mayonnaise are packaged in 500-gram jars. About 30 percent of canned and preserved fish are in packages of from 1 to 5 kilograms.

Until now, practically nothing has been done for production in small packages of several types of building, paint and varnish materials. Furthermore, the Ministry of the Construction Materials Industry enterprises put on the market up to 50 percent of window glass in containers weighing up to 3 tons, and the remaining amount in boxes weighing from 200 kilograms up to a ton. Packaging of cement in polyethylene bags weighing 5, 10 and 15 kg. has not been organized. More than 35 percent of the manufactured stock of nails is shipped into trade in metal and wood barrels weighing from 500 to 1300 kilograms. There is a shortage of paint and varnish materials; nevertheless, they are marketed in 3 to 5 kilogram jars, and this leads to inefficient use of scarce materials in practice.

The consumer now also presents increased demands for printing on packages, which helps a person to be oriented in the mass of freely displayed articles and contributes to an acceleration of the obtaining of goods. But the packaging of most goods is colorless and dull. In addition, frequently low-quality materials are used in packaging, as the result of which it does not even guarantee the preservation of products. For example, 15 percent of the products marketed in the Moscow department stores in paper packaging needs additional weighing, especially the production of factory no. 1 and 2 of the Moscow Macaroni Industry Production Association in Moscow.

Goods packaged in moisture-resistant cellophane, polymar films and laminated paper are practically not marketed. And, indeed, tough packaging permits products to pass through the whole cycle of the movement of products without loss of weight and to increase their shelflife. Thus, if meat or natural semimanufactures are kept for eight days without packaging, the meat losses comprise up to 3 percent, but when kept in polyethylene film, the meat losses are 0.2 percent. Carcasses of birds packaged in a Saran type film and kept for 5 months in a freezer have practically no losses, but when kept without packaging, the loss also reaches 3 percent.

The problem of increasing industrial production of semimanufactures for public eating also has great national economic and social importance. Meanwhile, this production is not used much in cafe and restaurant kitchens. The value of meat semimanufactures prepared industrially to be used at public eating enterprises comprises only 32 percent; of fish semimanufactures, 27 percent, and vegetable semimanufactures, 1 percent in all.

Forced development of the output of packaged food products in the USSR is an urgent matter, and for it, it is necessary to pay attention to the Complex Program to be developed now for the development of the production of consumer goods and of a system of services to the people for 1986-2000. This is the reliable lever to the solution of many economic, social and political tasks related to increased efficiency of public production and a rise in cultural services of the Soviet consumer in the economy of his free time.

CONSUMER GOODS PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

RIISING BUILDING COSTS, FAULTY EQUIPMENT DELAY STORE OPENINGS

Moscow EKONOMICHESKAYA GAZETA in Russian No 7, Feb 84 p 18

[Article by V. Zubov, deputy chairman, City Development Combine Planning Commission, Novosibirsk City, in the column "The Reader Responds":
"Building Trade Objectives"]

[Text] Why building deadlines are delayed. Price rise of 400,000 rubles. Who is making the equipment?

With pleasure I read an article in a weekly publication, "The House Is Rented. And the Store?" However, the problems raised in it do not reveal the reasons for not developing resources for stores, and the recommendation to concentrate resources, I think is not achievable.

A multiyear study of the practice of development of tracts has shown that a large part of the blame for delayed opening dates of stores lies with the management of the business and other organizations to whom the building objectives of the business are assigned.

We shall begin with the project planning. There are no standard trade mountings in the full-assembled variant. For individual project planning, it is necessary to have specification limits up to 3 percent from the cost of the objective, but according to the Housing Construction Branch, the RSFSR Gosplan sets the specification limits at 1 percent. As the result of a lack of limits and labor intensiveness of project planning even at the planning stage, the trade objectives lag behind the first residential homes.

It is still more complex for the separate buyers, where the cost of the store sometimes comprises 30-40 percent of the cost of a house.

Because of the individual plans and increased requirements for separate finishing in comparison with housing, the labor intensiveness per square meter of trade area is high, and the builders appear to be uninterested in raising these objectives, especially if they are laid out in additional or separately standing mountings.

But time passes, and the builders, after completing the installation work, commence the finishing work. And, instead of preparation of personnel and

other organizational means related to more rapid opening of stores, vigorous action of another order begins. As a rule, requirements for finishing work are changed, and frequently the allocation is changed; this leads to a considerable increase in cost and alterations, and, consequently, the deadline for renting the store for use is set back. Thus, for only one food store on Chelyuskints Street in our city, the cost increase was 400,000 rubles. Because of the change in allocation of the store, in building No 59 on the Volochaev tract, after installation of the casings of the building, the increase in cost comprised more than 130,000 rubles.

As a rule, in renting for use, the equipment is changed, and this leads to alteration of electrical wiring, ventilation, etc.

Problems of the manufacture of nonstandard equipment (counters, cupboards, etc.) are completely unresolved, it is difficult to find manufacturers of such equipment, and the customer, in addition, does not have material funds (plastics, aluminum foil, etc.).

But here, it seems, the finishing work is complete. Then one more subcontractor arrives. He begins to plan and install fire alarms, "tangling" the new, excellently insulated place with hundreds of meters of wires.

Where, then, in all these problems is the role of planning management and capital construction of the USSR Ministry of Trade, and isn't it time to regularize the solution to these problems?

The recommendation made in the article on the efficient use of 5 percent deductions in the presence in the city of several dozen buyers is difficult to carry out, because the system of transfer of unit shares is complex.

The building of stores would go at a more rapid pace by showing real help with the problems posed on the part of the USSR Ministry of Trade and by the generalization of positive experience accumulated in other oblasts and republics.

12410

CSO: 1827/161

HOUSING AND PERSONAL SERVICES

RSFSR MINISTER INTERVIEWED ON CONSUMER SERVICES

LD181413 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 0900 GMT 18 Mar 84

[Interview granted by Ivan Grigoryevich Dudenkov, RSFSR minister of consumer services, to correspondent Lyudmila Khostova, on housing, municipal and consumer service workers day--date and place not given; recorded]

[Text] [Dudenkov] Consumer services are a young dynamically-developing and very socially important sphere of the national economy. In recent years a very great amount has been accomplished in this area thanks to the great assistance of the party and state. The scale of activities has increased, and the material and technological base has been strengthened. At present virtually every family avails itself of consumer services, and it is no longer possible to imagine our present-day life without, so to speak, constant consumer services. Up to 900 kinds of service are now being provided. Indeed, in the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth 5-Year Plan periods this sphere was developed at a very fast pace, and at present some tendency towards a slowing of this pace has begun to show.

We are aware from letters reaching us from the working people, from personal observations and from comprehensive checks that not all services are yet being satisfied in full. There are criticisms and claims with regard to quality. The time taken to fulfill orders does not always suit people. There are questions, too, regarding the working routine of our enterprises. We have analyzed, so to speak, the causes behind the existing situation, and have looked for ways to achieve a speedy solution of these problems and issues. After all, a specific complaint can be considered quickly and a positive decision taken in regard to it, but it is necessary to trace the reason for such complaints arising and provide for a solution of the problem that would create a situation that does away with the very causes for such complaints arising.

Indeed, certain new approaches to solving the economic problems and issues were devised, and they, really speaking, were the basis of those proposals that were submitted on behalf of the RSFSR Council of Ministers to the directive bodies. The Central Committee of the party and the USSR Council of Ministers deemed it possible to agree with these proposals and to grant permission for the economic experiment to be conducted.

[Khvostova] What in practice will the experiment give the population and the customer?

[Dudenkov] If one is speaking of what the customer is gaining, then a faster development will be provided in this regard of precisely those services for which the population pays out of its own budget. Our consumer services are made up of some services extended merely to the population and of some services that we extend to organizations and enterprises, such as kindergartens, hospitals, schools, young pioneers' camps and so forth. A striving to quickly develop services that are paid for by the population is now coming to the fore. This applies particularly to all forms of repair work involving household equipment, radio and television equipment, footwear, clothes and knitwear. It applies too to repairs to apartments, requests for which are in some places only 20-25 percent satisfied.

It is on the volume of paid services that virtually the whole economic chain affecting the well-being of the consumer services collective is being made dependent. That is to say, if they achieve the appropriate growth in the volume of these services, if the qualitative aspect of their work improves and if the time they take to carry out orders is reduced, they will indeed then receive the entitlement to certain additional economic benefits both as individual workers and as collective as whole. The experiment provides for the fact, say, that the profit earned, except for a small transfer to the budget, remains at the disposal of the collective for the formation of social development funds, for reconstruction and technical modernization, and for the construction of, say, social amenities. They will be able to spend these funds on housing. We are incorporating into the economic experiment a freer use of the allocated limit of earnings. That is to say, if the same volume of work is performed by a smaller number of people, they are entitled to make use of the savings from their wage funds on additional incentives for the quality, speed and standard of services, that is precisely....

[Khvostova interrupting] Excuse me, but is this for those who work well?

[Dudenkov continuing] That is, to mark more fairly those who work best and to mark high qualifications. The extensive system of measures in this area will encourage people to struggle to raise their professional qualifications.

[Khvostova] Yes, indeed. Ivan Grigoryevich, how long will the experiment go on for?

[Dudenkov] We are commencing the experiment from 1 July and are due to conduct it for one calendar year, that is to 1 July next year. What is indisputably determined to be expedient and useful will be made part of the conditions of work of the services sphere for the 12th 5-Year Plan period.

CSO: 1827/187

HOUSING AND PERSONAL SERVICES

RSFSR MINISTER DESCRIBES CONSUMER SERVICES EXPERIMENT

LD171551 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 0830 GMT 17 Mar 84

[Text] Specialists of industry are preparing for the holding of an economic experiment at consumer services enterprises, which is to start on 1 July in a number of krais, oblasts and autonomous republics of the Russian Federation. Ivan Grigoryevich Dudenkov, RSFSR minister of consumer services, speaks about this.

[Begin Dudenkov recording] It is intended to try out new elements of the economic mechanism which were incorporated, in principle, in the plan directive for the 12th 5-Year Plan, on eight territories of the Russian Federation, at consumer service enterprise in areas with various climatic zones, different types of territory, different population densities. The decision by the party Central Committee and by the Council of Ministers to conduct an economic experiment in a number of territories of the Russian Federation, at consumer services enterprises, is aimed above all at the rapid development of consumer services, at a qualitative improvement of its work in all directions.

If one follows the trend of development of this industry, it is a very dynamic, young industry and was only set up in an organized manner in 1965 and has had very rapid, steady growth rates. In recent years these rates have slowed up a bit. Now it is a question of giving new impetus to the creative initiative of these collectives, so that they should also be economically interested, so that they know that the level of their wages and the level of material stimulation depend on their work.

The second part of the problem is to direct the attention of our collectives, above all, to serving the population, so that the repair services, personal services, such as laundry, repair of apartments, repair of radio and television equipment and domestic machinery, hairdresser services, the hiring out of articles, the quantities of which have not been sufficient to meet the demand of the population, should develop.

The economic independence of the enterprise, as a collective, is increasing. It is set quite few, in fact four, normative indices: volume of consumer services, including volume of consumer services in rural areas; the norm for assignment of profits, the norm for increase in wages. In fact, the collective forms the whole plan of its production and social development independently. The whole volume of profits, in practice, with the exception of a fixed share established in the budget, remains at the disposal of precisely these collectives, so that the collectives be concerned, as it were, in the development itself, so that they earn for themselves, through stepping up the volume of services. In order to develop both the production aspect, and of course especially to solve social problems, there are still many needs. so to speak, in our collectives in this respect. Moreover, freedom is being created to use the allocated volume of the salary, and if the implementation of a set volume of work is secured by fewer people, then the amount saved can be used to encourage the best collectives. We have the right, in conformity with this document, to give extra pay for high, particularly good quality work, above that [word indistinct] by the wage scale by a certain percentage. Freedom is also given for completely new forms of organization, the contract form, when we conclude a contract, either to combine jobs with a comrade working elsewhere, in his spare time from his main job, or with a pensioner or housewife. This will help us to use such categories of people as pensioners, housewives, people working for only part of the day or week, even students during the holidays. People who combine jobs constitute large reserves. Now this document gives a very broad initiative for the correct and active use of these forms by our managers.

We believe that in these territories the experiment that is being carried out will make it possible to find a whole range of new economic levers, which will have a positive effect on the whole organization of consumer services. Much is given to us, and much is asked of us. I believe that our people will have the greatest sense of responsibility with regard to this experiment, and its results will help us work better, with more results, in the 12th 5-Year Plan. I would of course like our services to always be called good mood services. [end recording]

CSO: 1827/187

HOUSING AND PERSONAL SERVICES

PROGRESS, PROBLEMS IN CONSUMER SERVICES IN BSSR EXAMINED

Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 29 Feb 84 p 3

[Article by I. Terekhov, chief of the Economic Planning Administration of the BSSR Ministry of Consumer Services, and I. Zaytsev, graduate student: "The Quality of Services"]

[Text] The population of Belorussia is receiving more than 700 types of consumer services of every conceivable type. Four hundred seventeen houses for consumer services are operating in the republic, 207 of them--in rural localities. In addition, 2,675 complete receiving centers have been opened in villages. The volume of services calculated per one inhabitant will increase to 34 rubles by the end of the five-year-plan.

The service sector is commonly called the service of good mood. And not without reason. The kind of service which a person received, let us say in a clothing repair and tailoring shop or in the barbershop, determines his mood and, in other words, his work capacity. Unfortunately, frequently the customers in the consumer services sphere still encounter a lack of service, low-quality service, lack of attention, and even rudeness. The reasons for this are not identical.

Consumer services constitute a rapidly and dynamically developing sector of the economy. In the recent past a great deal has been done in Belorussia to bring the consumer service enterprises up to the level of contemporary requirements. Among the people of Minsk, for example, the new House of Fashion, which was built 2 years ago on Mel'nikayte Street, is enjoying deserved popularity. The builders gave the workers in consumer services a beautiful modern building, after an original design was realized. In the salon the customer can receive various services. A special service provides necessary information. Here demonstrations of new clothing models for the populations are held on a regular basis.

From the beginning of the five-year-plan, new houses for consumer services and production facilities of consumer services combines have been introduced in Belorussia in the cities of Zhodino, Lida, Pruzhany, and Braslav. And a total of 114 consumer services enterprises have been constructed and reconstructed.

Much is being done to improve the quality of services and the introduction of new advanced forms of service. Broad use is being made of such popular consumer services as the quick execution of orders, customer service on a subscription basis, and the rendering of services at home.

In terms of the realization of consumer services calculated on a per capita basis, the Ministry of Consumer Services of the republic occupies fourth place among the congeneric ministries of the country. And in terms of such types of services as the repair of footwear, the manufacture of knitted wear, and the individual sewing of clothing--first place. Such socially important services as the repair of household appliances, dry-cleaning and laundry of underwear, and services for hire stations and radio and television equipment repair are being developed.

But why is it that nevertheless the customer, who comes for a necessary service, by far not always encounters attention and sensitiveness or finds what he needs? In our sphere, everything in the final analysis is determined by the constantly growing and changing demands of the population, by fashion, and by the tastes and individual peculiar traits of every customer. In practice things are not always as they should be.

Much has been said about the necessity of developing a scientifically-based system of economic indicators for consumer service. We are raising these questions at various conferences and seminars. The quality and high standards of services, the length of time required for the execution of orders, and the quantity of free time saved for the customer--these indicators must be considered on a level with the volume of the services provided. The material prerequisites for the introduction of such a system exist. But here the administration of the sector, alas, have not yet achieved harmony in work.

Let us refer to a concrete example. In accordance with the instruction of the USSR Gosbank, the enterprises of the Gomel Oblast have been transferred to a new system of calculating plan fulfillment. Its essence consists in the following. Previously everything was included in the plan for the realization of consumer services here which was received and paid for by the rayon combines or by the rayon production administration as the intermediary between the producers of services and the customers. Moreover, it was of no significance whether this production found a market among the population or piled up in the warehouses. It goes without saying that such a practice will not do at all. Now the plan fulfillment of specialized enterprises is made dependent on the direct sale of the production to the population.

Production which is not in demand accumulates in the warehouses of the intermediary enterprises. But, you know, for the rayon link of consumer service even the most insignificant volume of nonsaleable goods at once "pulls" down the economic indicators. The new system of calculations among the enterprises exerted a positive influence on the final work results. There was an increase in the quality of the orders executed directly at specialized enterprises, and there was a reduction in the remnants of unmarketable articles. As we see, this is advantageous to all--both to the workers in consumer services, and to the customers.

However, to develop this system is impossible because of a shortage of working capital. Even the BSSR Ministry of Consumer Services is not in a position to solve these problems. We would like for the USSR Ministry of Finance, the USSR Gosbank, and the Central Statistical Administration of the country to examine the question of increasing the working capital for the operational activity of the administrations and enterprises of the system. We will also have to determine the procedure for the calculations for the production sold among specialized enterprises and rayon production administrations.

Cooperation with large specialized enterprises is conducive to the successful work of many of our rayon combines for consumer services. The introduction and broad development of a new progressive form is related to the improvement of consumer service, above all of rural inhabitants. Cooperation creates good conditions for the work of rayon combines, helps in increasing volumes and in expanding the list of services in the village. The following order has been established for the assessment of the activity of specialized enterprises that carry out orders through cooperation: The assessment proceeds on the basis of the fulfillment of two plans in sum--the realization of consumer services and work carried out through inter-system cooperation.

In practice, the specialized enterprises fulfill up to 70 percent of the services through cooperation. And only 30 percent fall to the share of properly consumer services. The demand is realized exactly on the basis of the second column--the first one does not worry anyone. At times this reaches the point of being funny: The ministry and the oblast administrations for consumer services pay bonuses to the collectives of enterprises in accordance with the sum of the two plans. But at the local level the managers of these enterprises receive penalties. Let us take, for example, the Vitebsk Rembyttekhnika [Consumer Equipment Repair] Production Association. In March of the past year, the collective, on the basis of the two plans, successfully coped with the production tasks and received rewards. At the same time, it did not "pull out" the plan for the volume of sale of consumer service. And the director of the enterprise, P. Yesenov, had to account for himself. Recently there was a repetition of this story.

Among the urgent problems we will name the procedure for the planning of consumer services. As is well known, the consumer service enterprises, along with the plan for the realization of consumer services, are given tasks also with respect to commodity turnover at the retail level. The BSSR Ministry of Consumer Services is not coping with the fulfillment of the plan for commodity turnover. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belorussia has analyzed the reasons for such a state of affairs and has criticized the organization of the business in the sector. Concrete measures have been developed to improve the entire organizational and production staff of the sector.

Another thing gives rise to concern. By far not always are even good collectives able to work purposefully and smoothly. The imperfect system of the planning, calculation and assessment of the economic activity of consumer service enterprises prevents this. At the present time, the volume for the majority of types of services is planned at the standard cost of processing. This means that only work and services are included in the plan--allowing for

the price of materials and spare parts. Such a system justifies itself. To take if only the repair of household equipment and radio and television equipment. After the transition to the planning of this type of service on the basis of the cost of processing, there was a sharp reduction in the utilization of spare parts and units. The result is an economy of 6.3 million rubles for the sector.

At the same time, the plan for commodity turnover established for the enterprises leads to the growth of services with the utilization of expensive materials since not only labor expended for the production of articles, but also the cost of raw material and materials are included in commodity turnover. A contradiction arises: On the one hand, consumer service must satisfy the needs of the individual customer, on the other--the workers in consumer service must refuse these services to the population, being concerned with the fulfillment of the plan of commodity turnover.

The same blouse made of a mixture of wool and cotton yarn costs the customer 30-40 percent less than blouse made of pure wool. But the labor expenditures, regardless of the material, are identical. And this is what happens: In order to attract the customer and to secure the fulfillment of the plan for the fulfillment of consumer services, it is advantageous to manufacture goods more cheaply. In the plan of commodity turnover underfulfillment arises in this case. The question arises of how to control production? And is it necessary at all to carry the plan for commodity turnover to the consumer service enterprises?

An experiment that is about to take place in the system of the RSFSR Ministry of Consumer Services inclines us, too, to search for new forms of work with the population and the improvement of the quality of services. As is well known, the February Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee urged not to wait for the results of the experiments, to show initiative in management activity. A great deal in this direction has already been realized. To fulfill the task that has been set more successfully, we must decisively improve the consumer service and increase the quality of its work.

8970
CSO: 1827/175

HOUSING AND PERSONAL SERVICES

KOMI ASSR CONSUMER SERVICES MINISTER ON ECONOMIC EXPERIMENT

Moscow EKONOMICHESKAYA GAZETA in Russian No 13, Mar 84 p 17

[Text] As provided for by the decree of the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers, on 1 July an experiment will begin in the system of the Komi ASSR Ministry of Consumer Services. Here is what Semen Vladimirovich Poshumenskiy, the minister of consumer services of the autonomous republic, told our correspondent in connection with this.

The fact that our republic was named among the other 8 regions selected for the experiment both makes us happy and lays great responsibility on us.

Already today it is absolutely clear that the task which has been entrusted to us--to verify through practice new elements of management in the service sphere--can be successfully realized only if we actively work in close cooperation with the local party, soviet and economic organs and organizations.

First of all, the further strengthening of the material-technical base of the sector is necessary although recently quite a bit has been done. Not long ago we introduced a house for consumer services in the settlement of Vyktyl and in Usynsk. A factory is being opened for the dry-cleaning of clothes and the laundry of underwear with a capacity of 1,200 kilograms per shift. In Ukhta and Vorkuta enterprises have been introduced for the repair and construction of housing. In Vorkuta two new specialized plants have been opened--for the repair of fur articles and for the repair and manufacture of footwear in newly allotted premises. On a shared basis involving the Ministry of the Coal Industry and the Ministry of Consumer Services, a House of Consumer Services is being built in the settlement of Vorgashor, where the largest mine in the republic is located. . .

The active participation in the development of the system of services of the ministries and departments can be illustrated by one example: For every ruble invested in this undertaking by the Ministry of Consumer Services of the Komi ASSR there is a ruble invested by industry, by forestry and agriculture. We have concluded agreements with the Komilesprom [Komi Lumber Industry] and the Ministry of Agriculture concerning labor cooperation (by the way, during the 10th Five-Year-Plan alone the volume of services in the village increased more

than twofold). In the course of the experiment, cooperation must become still more firmly established.

Secondly, parallel with the strengthening of the material base we are expanding the educational base. Not long ago the new high-quality building of the Syktyvkar Technological Tekhnikum for Consumer Services was built, and the former one was turned over to an educational combine.

The adoption, introduction and broad dissemination of progressive experience must become the third important element. In particular, in the Lenbytradio-tekhnika [not further identified] collective, decorated with the Order of the Red Banner, we studied the experience of brigade labor organization. We created a multiple integrated brigade of telecommunication foremen consisting of 45 people, which combined both stationary workers and line workers, who have taken up the entire volume of work, including the establishment of antennas.

We have introduced subscription service for televisions (already about half of the units are encompassed by this method). Now the foremen are interested not in the quantity of the repairs, but in their quality. We intend to establish a fixed wage fund per year for the brigade.

The brigade forms of work will also be disseminated among the sewing industry workers, barbers and other professions, as well as home-workers (35 of them are already working, and by the end of the year there will be up to 100). For this reason we are now actively working with the Ministry of Social Security of the republic and also with the Ministry of Trade in connection with the permission to obtain various commodities for the needs of [consumer] service.

The experiment envisages the preservation of payments, benefits and additional charges for our region. We hope that this will find a corresponding reflection in the normative documents, which are now being developed, as well as the right--envisaged in the decree--of consumer service enterprises to obtain the necessary goods in the trade.

At the present time, the essence of the experiment is being explained in the labor collectives and the suggestions that are being made are being generalized. The preparation for the experiment was discussed at the collegium of the ministry. Everything possible is being done to approach its beginning in the best possible way.

8970

CSO: 1827/175

HOUSING AND PERSONAL SERVICES

SERIOUS PROBLEMS PLAGUE AUTO SERVICE CENTERS

Moscow NEDEL'YA in Russian No 3, 16-22 Jan 84 p 6

[Article by Ruslan Bichev: "The Zigzags of Auto Service"]

[Text] NEDELYA has written more than once about the problems of auto service. We have also reported on the serious shortcomings in the work of the technical centers and automobile service stations. Naturally, we have received replies on the measures that have been taken as well. But the facts testify that the acuteness of the problem is not abating. This is why, in publishing the report of our correspondent today, the editors invite all to take part in the discussion of the questions which are posed in it.

I will begin, perhaps, with the fact that by the beginning of the past year my "Zhigulenok" [small Zhiguli car] had gone around the earth at the equator twice, i. e., it had traveled more than 80,000 kilometers, and the time had come to change the camshaft in the engine. Every automobile lover knows what this will cost, since a camshaft is a superdeficit item! And suddenly I find out that in the Technical Center of the Order of the Red Banner of Labor Volga Automobile Plant imeni 50-letiya SSSR registration has opened for the replacement of camshafts. I went. I was successful and registered. And after 4 months I received a postcard with an invitation to come to the Technical Center. No, not on wheels, on wings I rushed through the streets of Moscow early in the morning. But a good dozen of invited people was already crowding at the gate.

A tiny window was opened, and here the first "epic tale" awaited us. It turned out that the replacement of the camshaft will be made only if we. . . pay for the complete technical service of the automobile--the engine, the moving parts, the electrical equipment. . . But the majority of us had no need for such service. All the more since the replacement of the camshaft, as it became clear, costs 34 rubles, and the cost of the technical service--cost another 35 rubles. Naturally, we began to object and to argue, but the energetic receptionist at the order desk closed the window, filled with indignation by our lack of comprehension: "This is how the procedure is established, what is there to argue about?"

No, we all understood. Everyone of us more than once had to pay through the nose for various deficit spare parts, but this happened in dealing with private traders and "under the table" dealers. But here a state institution announces without beating around the bush: Pay double--and we will take care of it, if you don't pay--we won't do it! And, you know, this is what is interesting: All paid double.

I filled out the order and drove my car, which had just been washed at home, to the line for washing: Whether necessary or not necessary, go through the washing, so they can take from you another 1 ruble and 5 kopecks over and above the cost of your order. I stood in this line for almost an hour, and only at 11 o'clock turned over the car to a foreman-receptionist. He declared that the work would be done by 5 o'clock in the evening. At precisely this time I came back to the Technical Center--and wasted another good 2 hours there. I did not sit down once because in the enormous premises of this enterprise there is neither a chair nor a small bench!

At last at 8 o'clock in the evening (!) I saw my car at the gates of the plant. But what is this? . . . In the morning I had turned over a car which was in good condition, a car in which only a couple of valves made a slight tapping noise (because the very worn-out camshaft), they now brought me from the plant something with a much louder rumble, like a cart on cobblestone. And the foreman-receptionist (whose name and patronymic I did not find out) reported authoritatively: During the replacement of the camshaft it became clear that the entire fuel distribution mechanism must be exchanged, but now the warehouse is already closed, tomorrow is Sunday, and on Monday they take inventory there. And therefore, come back next week, again register your order, and they will take care of everything for you.

But it was impossible to even leave the Technical Center in this thundering car. And I began to run all over its enormous plants, from one official to the other. At first I demanded, then I argued, and then I quietly asked. . . At last, after the intervention of the chief of the shift, a compromise solution was found: I will pay for the order, but the car stays at the plant, and they will turn it over to tomorrow's shift. . .

In the morning I set off for the Technical Center. And imagine: Already after an hour I left from there in my well-repaired car. It turned out that nothing in it had to be exchanged: The day before they simply misaligned the camshaft when they installed it. Now they installed it correctly. And that is all!

Before commenting on this "zigzag" of auto service, I will tell about one more thing. . .

After the replacement of the camshaft, I drove for some time and noticed: The bearing of the water pump makes a noise. The water pump must be replaced. I again set off for the Technical Center. There I was told: "We receive 1 or 2 pumps a day, and if you come early in the morning, we will accept your order. But! . . . We do not have the gaskets under the body of the pump, for this reason we will leave your old gasket, and you will sign a statement to the effect that you will not file any claims."

Really! A reliable specialized enterprise for the repair of automobiles considers it possible to entrust its production to a customer on condition that he sign a statement to the effect that, in case of a defect, he will file no claims! And why such a "zigzag", all the more so since in the Catalogue of the Work of the Technical Center under No 17302 the following operation is mentioned: "Manufacture of water pump gasket" and its cost--1 ruble and 4 kopecks. But, apparently, the administration of the Technical Center considers this operation disadvantageous! I had to furnish the statement. I decided: I will cut out the gasket myself.

And again there was lengthy running about from window to window through the long plants (for some reason one has to register the order in one building, but pay the money in another building), and again I lost almost an hour for the unnecessary washing, and again came for the second time to the Technical Center at 5 p.m. This time I waited one and a half hours. They bring the documents: "Pay for the work!" I look: Again disorder. They were supposed to change the coolant--"Tosol", but they poured in ordinary water. Again I began to run through the long plants from chief to chief--and to no use: "There is no "Tosol". "And where," I ask, "is my car?" "Oh, on the street." "How, on the street?" "Over there, at the edge of the territory, there is a lot, and that is where we put cars that are finished."

I go. . . Indeed, enclosed by a pipe fence, there is a lot, on it stand cars, and there is nobody nearby. Rain is falling; the lighting of the lot is poor, you cannot make out anything. I put a rag on the wet ground, got down on my knee, looked under the belly of the car. No kind of dripping. . . I got into car and took off, "persecuted by the wind", from our leading enterprise of auto service.

I went and I thought: How is this--we scold (and, evidently, not for nothing) our consumer service, but--you know--if I give some kind of an old coat to a sewing shop for repair, the cutter brings it cut to me, puts it on me, measures and touches it up. . . And here I collect from repair a car, which is a thousand times more expensive than that coat, and the main thing is not that it is more expensive, but the fact that not without reason it is called a "means of increased danger" by lawyers: To it I entrust my life, the life of my family, and the lives of many more people! But nobody delivers it to me or checks it with me, instead they are interested in only one thing: "Have you paid? . . . Then go into the street and pick up your heap of trash!"

Well, the time has come to generalize. We will not be one-sided and tendentious--we will note that a network of auto service stations has been created and is operating and in some way helps us auto-lovers: In the final analysis, you know, they did replace the camshaft and water pump for me. But every time a person turns to auto service today it is connected with unthinkable expenditure of time, effort, and nerves. And money, too.

There is no doubt that a whole series of problems in this sphere of service have to do with the fact that it is comparatively young and the economic mechanism in it has not settled. And it must work so that bunglers and poor workmen would be easily discovered and would in a natural manner find themselves outside the gates of the enterprises, but the skilled and conscientious

workers would be given incentives. Here the brigade form of labor organization will, evidently, be of unquestioned use, but in auto service it is being introduced timidly up to now. The most expedient system of management of the new service sphere has also not been found. Its enterprises in 11 union republics are subordinated to the Soyuzavtotekhnobsluzhivaniye [Technical Maintenance of Privately-Owned Automobiles Industrial Association] of the USSR Ministry of the Automotive Industry, but in the RSFSR such enterprises are within the jurisdiction of the republic Ministry of Motor Transport, and in Estonia, Lithuania and Uzbekistan--of the ministries of consumer services. In addition, there are "firm" enterprises of the automobile plants VAZ [Volga Automobile Plant], AZLK [Moscow Order of the Red Banner of Labor Automobile Plant imeni Leninskiy Komsomol], and ZAZ [Zaporozh'ye Automobile Plant]. I will not take it upon myself to judge more comprehensively which form of subordination is better, but I suggest that this diversity does not help to bring order and to disseminate useful experience.

Serious doubts are also called forth by the "gigantomania" that has been noted, in other words--the aspiration to construct excessively unwieldy enterprises. And we are not only talking about the fact that a small auto service station near at hand is more convenient for the automobile-lover than the Technical Center, but by far if in addition he has to stand in long lines. In the given case, we are talking about the fact that, according to the testimony of experts, the productive and financial activity of such an enormous and multi-profile enterprise as, for example, the Moscow Technical Center of the Volga Automobile Plant (sale of cars, spare parts, all types of repairs, and money operations in the millions of rubles) is extraordinarily difficult to subordinate to effective control. In such circumstances, it is not easy to catch the bunglers, blackmailers, and thieves, who cling to "warm and cushy jobs", close to deficit services and the still more deficit spare parts.

How can the situation in auto service be changed? We must begin, it seems, to take under strict public control--with the help of the local party and soviet organs, with the participation of the organs of People's Control and the organizations of the Society of Automobile-Lovers (VDOAM)--the most important links of the auto service system.

The public can do a great deal. Above all--to secure strict control of the distribution of deficit spare parts, which have the quality of secretly disappearing from the warehouses of the stores and STOA [not further identified] and to turn up in the hands of speculators. The representatives of VDOAM could also come out against the extortions that I have mentioned and which in the auto service system are carried out in the most diverse forms. Public-spirited persons can be of great use if they take part in the analysis of complaints which are received by the auto service enterprises.

Naturally, I could not talk about all the afflictions of our auto service, and I do not consider the measures I have proposed as curing all the ills. I hope that the readers of NEDELYA will continue the discussion and contribute their suggestions.

8970

CSO: 1827/175

HOUSING AND PERSONAL SERVICES

MODERN HOUSING POORLY INSULATED AGAINST NOISE

Moscow SOVETSKAYA KULTURA in Russian 1 Mar 84 p 6

[Article by S. Nikolayev: "We Want Quiet!"]

[Text] The author of this article deals with the problem of great audibility in contemporary homes. What do specialists and our readers think about this subject? We await your letters.

The residents of the house pressed themselves to the windows, they jumped out onto the balconies. It was with justifiable curiosity, even with agitation that they observed how the movers brought the piano, shining with its black finish, up the drive. A real "Becker"! But it was not the make that had piqued the curiosity of the inhabitants of the 12-story tower. Something else concerned them: which floor would be the final destination of this "Becker," which lurched on the straps of the powerful movers? First, second, fourth... seventh! Finally! Those living on the upper and lower floors breathed a sigh of relief: danger passed. On the other hand, the nearest neighbors of those to whom the chic instrument had been delivered became despondent. Now there will be no rest, with the torture of the musical scales. You know yourselves what the audibility is. This scene is taken from life. I do not think that there is any need to convince anyone of its authenticity. Everyone has seen something similar.

Audibility. It came into our lives uninvited and unwanted, but by all accounts it came as a disease of the contemporary city that is difficult to cure. In the word itself--listen--there is something that penetrates everything, that drills through concrete and that creeps through the joints of paneled houses: audibility. This very audibility annoys urban dwellers; neighbors declare a war of sound on one another. One picked up a hammer, another responded immediately with a taped fortissimo, the third neighbor turned on the vacuum cleaner, television and washing machine simultaneously, and the tenth pounded the keys of a new "Zimmermann." And the house began to buzz, the sounds bounced from floor to floor, and the paneling began to shake, just as in that cartoon where poor sound insulation deprived a nice bachelor of his sleep. By the way, who among us has not suffered from the immoderate carousing of neighbors, from the young ignoramus who prefers a lot of decibels to music, or from the rumble of cans being carried along in the garbage system....

We note that more than once the movies, sensitively reacting to the concerns of the day, parodied or otherwise played on the high level of audibility in our homes. On television the other day, they showed a firm where the heroine suffers horribly from the fact that some obstinate and pitiless person on the other side of the wall taps with a hammer with a dull regularity--he is embossing metal. The movie ends completely idyllically: the heroine likes the embossing neighbor and hate turns to love. Alas, conflicts in life are sharper than in the movies, and we will say right out that a happy ending is rarer here. And if a neighbor annoys another neighbor through excessive noise, then they call the police. Yes, they call them. And the police, turning away from its main duties, is supposed to react: the squad piles into the "Gazik" and speeds off to combat noise.

Somewhat at random, I called the regional administration of internal affairs to find out if they had a lot of calls to defend silence. For a 3-month period, it turned out, the logs of the on-duty personnel registered 160. That is an approximate figure and in reality there are more.

In recent days, the announcers of central television have become the allies of the police.

On Sunday evenings, the call on us to "turn down the volume of television and radio receivers, so as not to disturb the rest of those around us on the eve of a new work week." It is impossible to measure the effect of such an appeal, but nevertheless it is thought that some good does come from it--the noise level does die down until the next day. And thanks for that! Of course, it seems strange to try to persuade grown people not to make noise, not to argue, not to walk on the lawns and not to touch something. Those ought to be obvious truths. But in any case, they do make noise and argue, they trample the young grass and they try to touch the museum exhibits. Are we deceiving ourselves? Anyway, it is necessary for the announcers to remind us delicately of the need to observe the rules of community living under the conditions of high audibility.

And what about the architects? And the builders? For they, after all, are the ones who plan and build the housing units where the sound waves roam so uninhibitedly. There is, after all, a special housing institute and Gosstroy. Much is said and written about beauty, expression and individuality in architecture, and about the nuances of planning, general effect and profile. And of course, one has to talk about that. But what do I, a new dweller, get out of the beauty of the facade if my apartment does not have the quiet that we all need? Should not those who plan standard housing for millions of people think about their psychological comfort? Is not contemporary science in a position to solve the question of improving sound insulation so that we neighbors do not hinder each other's rest and work? So that we did not have to whisper after 11 pm, were not required to turn off the tape recording with our favorite music or, on the other hand, listen to what our neighbor on the right likes?

Just think how much we lose in life because of this notorious audibility...we want quiet!

9746

CSO: 1827/160

CONSUMPTION TRENDS AND POLICIES

PROBLEMS OF RATIONAL CONSUMPTION EXAMINED

Moscow IZVESTIYA AKADEMII NAUK SSSR: SERIYA EKONOMICHESKAYA in Russian No 6, Nov-Dec 83 pp 25-35

[Article by N.M. Rimashevskaya and A.I. Levin: "Some Problems of Rational Consumption"]

[Text] This article contains an examination of some pressing consumption problems: the essence of the categories of "rational consumption" and "reasonable demand;" the interrelation between the rationalization of consumption and the rationalization of production; the culture of consumption and ways to reduce consumption costs; and the management of demand.

The June (1983) plenum of the CPSU Central Committee emphasized the need to carry out purposeful work on the formation of the reasonable needs and interests of the individual. One of the specific goals of this work is to provide guidelines for ways to rationalize the public's consumption.

By contributing to the harmonious development of the individual, reasonable consumption and a high level of satisfaction in meeting all-around needs, stimulates the public's labor activity and raises labor productivity and quality of labor, thus influencing the growth of effectiveness in public production. Rational consumption influences the growth of effectiveness in public production through other channels as well: it ensures the economical utilization of consumer goods while reducing total expenditures for their reproduction and increasing in this way the level of results obtained. At the same time rational consumption is an indispensable condition of the physical, and to a significant degree, of the moral health of the members of society. For these reasons the problems of consumption rationalization are acquiring particular urgency at the present time: they constitute one of the basic directions in the scientific-research and practical work in the area of improving the people's well-being.

The problems of rationalizing consumption are not new.¹ They have been debated for a long time in various branches of the scholarly literature, including the economic, philosophical, psychological and medical literature. However, it would be a mistake to claim that these problems have already been resolved and do not need further study. On the contrary, it is now coming being discovered that these problems have not been adequately studied, especially from a theoretical viewpoint, and this has a definite negative impact on practical activities in the area of consumption rationalization, which, unfortunately, is still being carried out in an extremely passive manner.

The lack of a solid theoretical base, as well as the practical significance of research into the problems of consumption rationalization for the resolution of the specific tasks of providing the maximum possible satisfaction of needs and improving planning to raise the public's living standard in general make it essential to give these problems further thorough study. We will consider the basic conceptual theoretical-methodological approaches to the investigation of these problems.

A theoretical interpretation of the essence of the "rational consumption" concept constitutes the initial stage of the research. But first it is essential to clearly determine the essence of rational, or reasonable needs because consumption is closely related to needs, and the formation of needs not only precedes consumption, but in a certain sense stimulates its development.

Under reasonable needs, in our view, one should understand those needs which correspond to scientifically-based ideas--accepted by society--of those living conditions for people which are advisable and essential for the comprehensive and harmonious development of the individual. Reasonable needs function in this way as distinctive, "socially useful" needs, the satisfaction of which provides for the greatest flourishing of a person's physical and spiritual forces.

Proceeding from this general (and to a certain degree conditional) concept of reasonable needs, rational consumption should be viewed as consumption which provides for their complete satisfaction and, consequently, which functions as a very important condition for the all-around and harmonious development of the individual.

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1. The elements of consumption rationalization can be found in the theories and even the practical actions of philosophers going back as far as the ancient world (Democritus, Diogenes).

In this way, reasonable needs and rational consumption are certain ideal categories, interpreted through the relations of social being and social consciousness and expressed in social (public) opinion. However, these ideal categories have real content and act as a primary goal, which developed socialist society aspires to achieve.²

However, with the flow of time not only the needs themselves but also scientific ideas about them change under the influence of various factors such as the development and improvement of production, the acceleration of scientific-technical progress, demographic shifts, changes in natural-climatic conditions, and, finally, new scientific information which emerges about the possibilities and biological needs of the human organism. For this reason the reasonable requirements themselves, if they are viewed as a particular method of expressing social consciousness, are not frozen once and for all in one form; they are constantly being changed and improved under the influence of the above-named factors.

The interpretations cited here for the "rational consumption" and "reasonable needs" concepts should be viewed only as possible ones. Nonetheless, we will accept hypothetically the above-formulated definitions of these concepts as basic to the theory of rational consumption.

At the present time this theory, and to some extent the actual practice of it, proceeds from an understanding of rational consumption as consumption which corresponds to certain rational norms which are established on the basis of present-day scientific knowledge. Moreover, it is considered a priori that these norms (which as a rule, are established by expert means) must be viewed as quantitative characteristics of the population's reasonable needs for specific benefits and services. In our view, this kind of approach to the problem of rational consumption cannot be accepted without substantial reservations.

First of all absolute needs, which are viewed as "the desire to possess goods" (2) are in principle unlimited, as the world of the material goods which are produced and serve to satisfy those needs is also unlimited (in time). While emphasizing this

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2. In this regard attention should be directed to the fact that in present-day formulations of basic economic law and the highest goal of socialism, it would be more correct to talk about the fullest satisfaction not of needs in general but of reasonable needs (material and spiritual). This is how the classics of Marxism have posed the question, noting that in a communist society the satisfaction of everyone's reasonable needs will be ensured to a continuously increasing extent (1).

limitlessness of needs (which, however, can be also be viewed as infinite), K. Marx wrote that "the needs, which are satisfied by goods are unlimited" (2, p 562). For this reason the establishment of any quantitative (although completely rational) norms of consumption in relation to needs is always fraught with the danger of some arbitrary limitation on them.

This kind of limitation, which one can call a rational-normative one, is permissible only with regard to the consumption of the specific benefits and services which a person has to satisfy his material needs at any given moment in time. As for spiritual needs, the establishment of consumption norms hardly makes sense: spiritual needs are not subject to the setting of norms. For this reason attempts which are sometimes undertaken to work out, say, "rational norms" for attendance at movies, the theater or museums can hardly be considered successful, especially if one considers that attendance at these cultural institutions depends on the artistic value of the films, theatrical performances or exhibitions, etc. being offered to the viewer, and there are no norms which can be used to judge this.

Thus the most likely sphere for the application of rational norms involves the consumption of material benefits. It can be said that the question of the advisability of establishing rational norms with regard to the consumption of material goods and services has already been resolved in practice. At the present time these norms have been worked out for the major foodstuffs, light industry items, goods for long-term use, as well as for certain types of everyday services.

There is a widely held opinion that society must strive for the strict observance of these norms by all consumers, and production should be oriented to these norms. With all its seeming "naturalness," this theory needs refining. First of all, these consumption norms, although it is accepted to call them recommended, presume the "subordination" of consumers' behavior to certain established canons (which may even be rational). In addition, real consumption is shaped under the influence of a multitude of the most varied factors which can substantially deflect it from so-called rational behavior, and the very mass of consumers is so diverse that it is not possible even to work out rational norms for all strata and groups of the population (especially if we are talking about the consumption of light industry items and recreational, educational and household goods.) And the main point is that no matter what the needs (even if they are extremely rational), their satisfaction, i.e., real consumption, is always limited and in this sense it is determined by the population's income.

The most realizable and practically accessible area of consumption rationalization is the consumption of food products.

This area directly concerns the needs of a person's physical life, which require to the greatest extent a certain rationalization from the viewpoint of scientific knowledge about the biological essence of the human organism (because the health of whole generations of people depends on the degree and quality of their satisfaction). However, even here the role of rational consumption norms can be overestimated. In order to prevent this it is essential to clarify fully what is meant by the concept of these norms.

First of all it should be remembered that the development of these norms begins with the establishment by the medical disciplines of biology, nutrition science and others, of the complete group of nutrients essential to the human organism as the basis for its normal functioning as a biological system. The transition from these groups of nutrients to the groups of specific food products is made to a significant degree by expert means with consideration for national traditions, natural-climatic conditions, types of diet, its cost indicators, and frequently production opportunities, etc.

For this reason the consumption of food products acquires a particularly prescriptive nature for the consumer and for production; this presupposes that the consumer will adhere to a rational diet structure and production will orient itself to produce food products in a structure which is close to real needs. Thus even with regard to food products, rational consumption norms function as prescriptions or "wishes", established by experts and recommended for consumers, and hence as a kind of guideline for production to the extent that the consumer will follow these rational norms. Production must be oriented to the public's real needs, and real needs must be formed in a rational direction.

As for non-food commodities (especially light-industry items and recreational, educational and household goods), their range is so diverse and the needs for them so variable that it is quite difficult to talk about the development of any kind of norms for their rational consumption. Clearly, in this case we can talk about the development of certain (extremely conditional) recommendations for the advisable consumption of, for example, a rational wardrobe or a rational set of items for long-term use, designed for a family or one person, but there is no way we can talk about the determination of rational norms for the consumption of cloth, shoes, knitted wear or norms for the provision of long-term use items, as occurs at the present time. Also, the establishment of rational sets of consumer goods which serve to satisfy any given need and which are designed for various socioeconomic and demographic groups of consumers is more comprehensible than, for example, the simple establishment of rational consumption norms for cloth or footwear. In addition, these

comprehensive "sets of norms," which are formed within the framework of one block of needs, are more convenient to use when planning production as well.

Thus the concepts of "reasonable needs" and "rational consumption" should not be identified with rational consumption norms and especially the first should not be replaced by the second. If reasonable needs and rational consumption constitute qualitative categories, which express a certain state of needs and consumption, then rational consumption norms are only certain conditional quantitative characteristics of these categories.

It is logical to think that the theoretical concept of consumption rationalization, like the practical activity in this direction, must be based on the above-formulated concepts of "reasonable needs" and "rational consumption." But inasmuch as variant readings are encountered in the interpretation of these basic concepts of the theory of rational consumption, the problem of consumption rationalization itself is not interpreted uniformly. Usually it is viewed as a problem of bringing actual consumption more in line with rational consumption. Moreover, what is understood by rational in this case is consumption which is in line with rational norms.

In our view, this interpretation somewhat narrows the problem of rationalizing consumption. After all, in reality the resolution of the problem of rationalizing consumption presupposes the creation of conditions for reasonable, effective consumption, which is in line with the scientifically grounded ideas accepted in socialist society about the organization of consumption in general (and not only about the quantitative characteristics of the rational consumption of benefits and services). Moreover, by effective consumption what is understood is consumption which provides for the satisfaction of reasonable needs with the minimum social expenditures.

Hence it follows that the problem of rationalizing consumption must be studied not only, if one can put it this way, at an exclusively quantitative level but also at a qualitative level. This results in the need to include in the analysis qualitative characteristics of consumption such as the quality of consumption; its organization and structure; the qualitative processes, which take place in the consumption sphere, in particular the process of generalization of this sphere; the reduction of consumption costs; the equalization of the territorial differentiation in the public's consumption; and the increase in the general culture of consumption, etc.

The latter has particularly great significance in the resolution of the problem of consumption rationalization. Speaking more precisely, the problem of consumption rationalization itself acts

as a component of the more general and complex problem of raising the culture of consumption.

Raising the culture of consumption is one of the most important problems in the area of forming, developing and satisfying the population's needs. It is directly related to the many aspects of the material and spiritual life of the members of a socialist society. Moreover, it has a close bearing on the purely economic sides of the development of public production--as a result a high culture of consumption on the part of the public contributes to the growth of effectiveness in public production. It is no accident that this is why the May (1982) and June (1983) plenums of the CPSU Central Committee emphasized the importance of the task of raising the culture of consumption (3).

Unfortunately, special scientific research on this problem has not yet been carried out, and it has not even been formulated within the framework of the concept of rational consumption. Incidentally, it seems to us that the problem of raising the culture of consumption is directly linked to the problem of its rationalization and for this reason it must be studied precisely within the framework of this concept.

In this regard the concept of the "culture of consumption" should be defined more precisely. In our view, this concept should be studied in two different, although closely related perspectives--the general economic and moral-psychological.

In the general economic perspective, the culture of consumption must be viewed as a certain generalizing social characteristic of society's achievements in the area of the consumption of material and spiritual benefits and services. In this sense the culture of consumption encompasses everything that is created in the process of social production and is designed to satisfy the population's needs, including not only the benefits and services themselves, but also various organizational structures which serve these goals (for example, health-care and cultural-education institutions, everyday service enterprises, public catering, etc.). Consequently, the culture of consumption is characterized not only by the volume, structure and quality of the benefits and services which are consumed, but also by the actual organization of consumption.

An analysis of the culture of consumption in the narrower, moral-psychological perspective makes it possible to define it as a moral attitude of society and its individual members to consumption in general and to consumer goods in particular. This attitude finds its concrete expression in society's capacity and the capacity of every individual to rationalize consumption, to utilize wisely and economically raw materials and finished products in consumption, to minimize losses of products when they

are being moved from the production sphere to the consumption sphere, as well as in each of the social production spheres, and especially in the actual consumption sphere, i.e., in each specific family.

Proceeding from this understanding of the culture of consumption, we can conclude that raising it requires the resolution of a set of socio-economic, organizational and moral problems both on the scale of the entire society as well as in the framework of the family united in the individual household.³ Without examining all of these problems in detail, we will note only that they lie at the junction of production and consumption.⁴

While studying the problem of rationalizing consumption as part of the more general problem of raising the culture of consumption, particular attention should be drawn to its close link with questions of rationalizing production. In our view consumption cannot be considered fully rational if production itself is not rational. In other words, there exists a very close inter-relationship between the degree of rationality found in consumption and production, and in the end this determines the inter-relationship between production and consumption.

However, the following question arises: what should we understand by rational production? What characterizes this type of production? The concept of rational production is interpreted quite broadly. In the most general form one can call rational that production which provides for the satisfaction of the public's reasonable needs with the least expenditures of labor and resources. This definition emphasizes two aspects: the target aspect of production rationality, which is determined by the extent of rational production, and the so-called expenditure aspect, which is determined by the level of expenditures for the production of material goods and services.

The achievement of rational dimensions of production, i.e., of those which ensure the satisfaction of reasonable needs, is linked to certain difficulties of a material-technical and financial nature and is limited by the general level achieved in the development of production forces. As for the second part of

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3. In this case we permit a certain distinction between the concepts of the "family" and the "household." While the family is the primary social, or more accurately, social-demographic nucleus of society, the basic features of which are relatedness and joint residence, the household is the economic nucleus, linked in addition to the above two features by (and this is actually its primary feature) a common budget.
 4. These problems have been considered to some extent in work (4).

the above-cited definition of rational production, it has a totally special significance. The fact is that neither production nor even consumption can be considered rational if they are based on the non-rational, uneconomical utilization of resources. After all, the production and consumption of individual goods and services, in amounts which correspond to the rational norms can also be achieved with excessive, completely unjustified expenditures of material, financial and labor resources, and with--and this is the main point--the disturbance of the ecological balance and other similar consequences harmful to the economy and to man, consequences which essentially come into conflict with the general vector of the public's needs; in this case one can hardly talk about rational production and consumption.

Unfortunately, there are quite enough examples of the uneconomical utilization of raw materials and finished output, as well as violations of the ecological balance. The non-rationality of production (and of consumption as a consequence) is also manifested in its non-rational organization, which also results in excessive expenditures of labor and resources for the production of particular commodities. It is well known, for example, that at the present time many of our country's plants produce various brands and models of television sets, refrigerators, washing machines and other commodities for long-term use. As a rule, these models duplicate one another in terms of their basic technical parameters and external appearance. Certain brands and models, such as the Rubin, Temp and Elektron color television sets, the Evrika washing machines or the Minsk and Oka refrigerators, for example, enjoy the greatest popularity among customers; they are produced at enterprises which are technically well equipped, have skilled personnel and which are distinguished by a high level of organization and labor quality.

At the same time not all models and brands of refrigerators and televisions which are being produced by industry at the present time meet the qualitative parameters set out for these products or are in line with customers' increasing demands.

One cannot talk about the the rational organization of production in this situation. Moreover, the non-rationality of production makes it difficult to achieve rational levels of consumption for the respective commodities because many commodities for long-term use which have been produced but which are not in demand virtually drop out of the resources for consumption.

With regard to the rationalization of production and consumption, the maintenance of ecological balance, not only in the sense of environmental protection but also in terms of the sound, careful utilization of scarce ecological resources has particular significance. The non-renewability (or the "difficult renewability") of many forms of natural resources inevitably leads to

a situation in which the non-rationality of their utilization for the production of consumer goods at the present moment in time invariably has a negative influence on the opportunities for the increased production of these commodities in the future because these resources will be continuously declining in a quantitative sense.

To this it should be added that the non-economical (and often wasteful) utilization of scarce eco-resources even now frequently leads to the disturbance of the ecological balance. The unjustified cutting down of forests can be cited as an example.

From what has been said above, it is clear that the rationalization of production itself is one of the most important ways of rationalizing consumption. In the specific cases cited above we are talking first of all about a reasonable approach to the utilization of scarce eco-resources which includes the following: replacing them (in the production of consumer goods) with synthetic materials, the possible applications of which our domestic industry has hardly exhausted, and creating an effectively operating system for recycling scarce metals used in the production of consumer goods, which is possible if the producers' material interest in this is increased by establishing, for example, a special price scale for secondary raw materials which have been collected, as well as by granting preferential conditions to consumers (as is currently done, for example, with spoilage), etc.

It is also advisable to concentrate the production of items for long-term use at a small number of technically well-equipped enterprises making products which are in great demand. This will make it possible, first, to eliminate the dispersion of resources among a large number of enterprises of the same type and to increase the effectiveness of their utilization; second, to reduce the unjustified proliferation of brands and models of the same long-term use items and to improve their quality; third, to bring the consumption of these goods to rational levels; and fourth, to provide for environmental protection.

Another aspect of the inter-related nature of the processes of rationalizing production and consumption concerns the rational utilization of scarce material resources. At the present time many scarce forms of consumer goods are utilized in an extremely uneconomical manner for so-called raw material purposes. It is well known, for example, that a significant amount of the cotton cloth, which is designated for consumption by the public goes for technical purposes. Cotton cloth is used, for example, to manufacture filter materials, abrasive emery cloth, and conveyor belts. Reducing this non-rational expenditure of scarce cloth for technical purposes means increasing its consumption by the public. It has been calculated, for example, that a reduction of

only 1 percent in the expenditure of cotton cloth for technical purposes makes it possible to save 13 million meters of this fabric for the public (5).

The proportion of whole milk which is used in animal husbandry for feeding young animals continues to be high. As a result, the resources of this valuable product delivered for public consumption are reduced. Non-rational expenditures of whole milk could be reduced and thus their utilization for food purposes could be increased by expanding the production of whole milk substitutes for feeding young cattle. In recent years the production of whole milk substitutes has increased in our country; however, it is still not large enough to fully satisfy the needs of animal husbandry. The resources of secondary milk raw materials--skim milk, buttermilk and whey--are also being utilized in a non-rational manner. At the present time an overwhelming proportion of these highly nutritious products of milk processing are returned to agriculture to feed cattle or they are used for technical purposes. Incidentally, the rational utilization of these products for food purposes could noticeably improve the protein content of the public's diet because the milk protein which is contained in the products of milk processing is highly nutritious. The broader utilization of milk processing products for food purposes would make it possible to rationalize the public's diet and to improve its quality without incurring any additional expenditures.

Significant reserves for increasing and rationalizing the public's consumption of food products are also to be found in the rational organization not only of the process of direct production but also of the operations involved in transporting and selling these products. It is well known that the non-rational organization of the process of transporting agricultural food products from the production sphere to the consumption sphere produces large losses of these products. For example, the annual losses of fruits and vegetables within the sphere of production and circulation alone amount to no less than 25 percent (6).

To this one should add losses in the actual consumption sphere in view of the non-rational storage and utilization by the household, something which cannot be directly measured.

But there are particularly substantial losses (in percentage terms) resulting from the non-rational organization of the food trade, especially as a consequence of the inadequate level of sales involving packaged goods, as well as from poor packaging. For example, in 1981 enterprises of the Ministry of the Food Industry delivered less than 50 percent of their output to commerce in packaged form, the Ministry of the Meat and Dairy Industry supplied about 40 percent in this form, the Ministry of the Fishing Industry about 30 percent and the Ministry of

Procurement only about 10 percent (7). Also, losses which occur during the sale of goods which must be weighed out are significantly higher than for wrapped and packaged goods; for example, for macaroni products the losses are 17-fold greater, for flour they are 9-fold greater, for groats 8-fold greater and for sugar 4-fold greater (7).

To this it should be added that supplying the trade network with unpackaged goods leads to the excessive expenditure of a significant quantity of scarce paper for wrapping products when they are sold to the public.

Using these examples one can trace a direct inter-relationship between non-rational utilization of resources in public production and non-rational consumption by the public. Moreover, non-rational utilization of resources, as can be seen from the above-cited facts, also has a negative effect on the general culture of public consumption: it develops a negative moral atmosphere of a non-rational attitude to the utilization of scarce resources on the part of society's members.

Thus, the rationalization of production, transportation and trade processes and operations contains enormous hidden reserves not only for quantitative increases in the public's consumption but also for qualitative improvement in its culture of consumption, which contributes, as a result, to the fuller and more rational satisfaction of personal needs.

The reduction of consumption costs has particular significance for the resolution of the consumption rationalization problem. However, before considering the link between these two processes--rationalization and the reduction of consumption costs, the socio-economic essence of the actual concept of "consumption costs" should be determined.

Conflicting interpretations of this category are encountered in the economic literature.

What is usually understood by consumption costs are expenditures of time related to the acquisition of goods and services, as well as the performance of various services within the framework of the household. Sometimes consumption costs also include costs related to the continuation of the process of material production within the household and to the creation of value (included here are home sewing, the repair of clothing and footwear, the manufacture of domestic articles, etc.). However, both these interpretations of consumption costs (among which we consider the first to be more accurate because costs related to the creation of new value within the framework of the household do not relate to consumption costs as such; rather they constitute production costs within the consumption sphere) do not include one extremely

important aspect, specifically the excessive non-rational losses of consumer goods in the actual process of consumption.⁵ Also, based on present-day notions about consumption rationalization, these losses must also be taken into account when describing consumption costs in general and when enumerating them quantitatively.

These losses occur to the greatest degree for food products; they arise during the process of food preparation and food storage or simply as the consequence of a non-economical (and even wasteful attitude) toward them. As a rule, losses of non-food commodities in the consumption sphere arise as a result of their non-economical utilization (including the non-critical acceptance of fashion, the poor-quality or poorly-timed care of things, non-rational use of long-term use items, etc.). Unfortunately, at the present time it does not seem possible to determine the extent of such non-rational losses of food products and non-food commodities because no statistics exist for them as yet.

As for losses of time spent on running a household, or, more accurately, on the organization of consumption within the framework of a household, they can be calculated, and with a rather high degree of accuracy. These losses are usually determined on the basis of special surveys of family time budgets and constitute, according to our calculations, approximately 180 billion man hours per year.⁶

One cannot directly add up these two parts of consumption costs, that is, the part which constitutes non-rational costs of goods during the the consumption process and that part which takes the form of time expenditures for consumption, because the first is calculated in monetary terms (and for food products in natural terms), while the second is calculated in man-hours of non-working time. However, these two heterogeneous values can be reduced to a "common demoninator" which expresses consumption costs in monetary form.

The methods used to make this calculation are quite simple: every man-hour of labor related to the purchase of goods or the running of a household is taken as one man-hour of unskilled minimum-wage labor. The monetary figure which is obtained for

5. Of course, we are not talking about those natural losses which arise, for example, in the actual process of cooking or, say, in the process of wearing clothing or using appliances or furniture, but about the non-rational losses which go beyond the limits of natural food losses or the natural norms for wear which have been established for items of clothing or long-term use commodities.

6. The calculations were made on the basis of data from (8).

consumption costs related to the running of a household can be added to the cost figure for non-rational losses of food products and non-food commodities during the consumption process.

In principle each of the above-named parts of consumption costs can be reduced by a corresponding rationalization of the consumption process. In particular, consumption costs related to time expenditures for the running of a household, can be reduced if a household is shifted "onto the rails" of technical progress. This can be achieved in two ways: firstly, by developing the service sphere, which "takes upon itself" the ever-growing part of the public's time expenditures for the running of a household, and secondly, by providing the household with the newest machinery and equipment to reduce the amount of time spent servicing one's own household.

One of the specific practical tasks of consumption rationalization is the establishment of an optimal relationship between these two directions in the reduction of consumption costs. The correct resolution of this task is possible only on the basis of multi-disciplinary experimental investigations into the advisability of replacing particular forms of household labor (even if it is mechanized to a high degree) with a publicly organized network of enterprises in the service sphere. Nonetheless, one can assert a priori that in terms of particular forms of activity related to the satisfaction of various needs, the relationship between these two forms of public consumption--the individual and the publicly organized--will be different.

It is logical to think that in the satisfaction of such needs as education and health care the proportion of publicly organized forms should remain at a sufficiently high level, and that for such needs as food preparation, house cleaning, etc. the individually organized forms of consumption will clearly retain their overwhelming significance (for the near future in any case). There is evidence of this specifically in the calculations made within the framework of an investigation into the expanded consumption fund concerning the sources of its formation; they showed that over an extended period of years the proportion of expenditures for publicly organized forms for the satisfaction of needs (for example, in education and health care) remains high and stable (9). At the same time the satisfaction of food and clothing needs clothing are carried out mainly in individually organized forms.

As for the dynamics of travel needs, the proportion of the individual form for the satisfaction of these needs is growing constantly due to the sharply increasing expenditures for the purchase and technical servicing of the means of individual transport.

In the future, the relation between these two forms of consumption--the publicly organized and the individual--will change in all probability; this will be facilitated, on the one hand, by the further expansion of the service sphere, and on the other, by constantly accelerating scientific-technical progress in the production of appliances which make domestic labor easier. However, it is highly unlikely that either of these forms will completely squeeze out the other. They will exist side-by-side, with their development slowing down or speeding up depending on the intensity of scientific-technical progress in the sectors which "provide" for them.

However, in the national economic plans preference should be given to that form of consumption which provides the greatest saving of consumption costs with the smallest relative expenditures. From this it follows that it is the consumption costs (or to put it more precisely--the savings of these costs) as one of the important directions in the process of rationalizing consumption which act as the basic criterion for the optimization of personal consumption forms.

The practical resolution of the problem of rationalizing consumption presupposes as an absolute condition the active, purposeful influence on the public's needs and on its effective demand as a form in which those needs are manifested. In this regard the planned management of public demand is of the most interest. The management of demand, in contrast with the formation of demand, is the more varied and more effective way to influence demand because the management includes--in addition to measures for socially and psychologically influencing demand (by advertising, by organizing sales exhibitions or consumer conferences, etc.)--the economic levers for stimulating it (or limiting it).

And the actual tasks which are resolved by means of measures for the planned management and formation of population demand are also different. While the formation of demand serves, as a rule, to resolve certain purely sectorial tasks of commerce and much less frequently "emerges" at the level of large-scale problems of public reproduction in general, demand management can be used to resolve such global economic problems as balancing supply and demand or selling commodities, as well as the problem of rationalizing consumption.

In the resolution of the latter the management of public demand plays a special role. The fact is that the overwhelming majority of the goods and services which the public needs "go through," so to speak, the market, and, consequently, the need for them takes the form of effective demand. For this reason a product of labor, before being consumed, must be purchased on the market, i.e., demand for it must be shown. Under these conditions the

task of rationalizing consumption must be resolved, and the management of the public's actual effective demand is one way to do this.

Unfortunately, at the present time the theory and practice of this kind of management, as a rule, does not set consumption rationalization as a goal. More often, it is aimed at maintaining the balance between supply and demand. However, if the balance between supply and demand is achieved without taking into account the requirements of rational consumption, it will hardly prove to be effective and stable: with non-rational consumption it always risks being disturbed. For this reason the management of the public's demand, even if its end goal is the maintenance of balanced development in the domestic market, must be oriented toward the rationalization of consumption.

The specific levers by which this management is ensured include, as mentioned above, not only socio-psychological means (the application of which in this case generally does not differ substantially from their application in the formation of needs) but also (and primarily) the economic levers, among which the mechanism of retail prices is the most flexible. Without examining in detail the features of its utilization, we will note only that in this case, that is, when resolving tasks of consumption rationalization, one should proceed not only from the social outlook on any given needs, but also from the social significance of the actual commodities, on which price changes are planned for the purpose of rationalizing consumption.

In this way the problem of consumption rationalization, which is comprehensive in nature, must be solved with the help of a set of inter-related measures. This kind of comprehensive approach to its study and resolution is, in our view, the most fruitful and promising.

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CSO: 1827/154

CONSUMPTION TRENDS AND POLICIES

CONSUMERS ADVISED TO TEMPER DEMANDS

Moscow RABOCHAYA GAZETA in Russian 4 Dec 83 p 2

[Article by P. Nadobenko, candidate of economic sciences and docent at Uzhgorod State University: "The Level of Reasonable Consumption"]

[Text] The concern for man and for the conditions of his work, daily life and his spiritual development have been and remain the party's most important program directive. Our society of mature socialism has enormous, constantly growing material and spiritual opportunities for the ever fuller development of the individual and for the discovery of his capacities. And it is very important for a person not only to be able to have those benefits which are granted to him but also to be able to use them intelligently. For this reason the 26th party congress and the June (1983) plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, in putting forward the tasks related to the education of the new man, paid particular attention to the formation of the interests and needs of the individual.

Indeed, the well-being of the Soviet people is increasing from year to year. This is clearly expressed first of all in the stable, dynamic growth of national income and the increase in the proportion which the consumption fund occupies in it. For example, in the 11th Five-Year Plan 90 percent of this fund is directed to current consumption and to socio-cultural construction in comparison with 82 percent in the past five-year plan. In this same period the consumption fund's proportion of national income will grow to 87 percent. As a result the total amount of funds directed to the implementation of centralized measures to increase the well-being of the working people will increase still further. Real per capita incomes will increase 16.5 percent. Nearly three-quarters of the growth will be provided through an increase in wages.

However, as Comrade Yu.V. Andropov noted, the formula for "increasing the standard of living" is frequently interpreted in an oversimplified manner, with people having in mind only the growth of the public's income and the production of consumer

goods. But, in fact, he emphasized, this concept is significantly broader and richer. There is also the continuous growth of people's consciousness and cultural level, including the culture of everyday life, behavior and what can be called the culture of reasonable consumption: there is also exemplary social order, good health and proper diet: there is also high quality service to the public and the profitable use of free time from a moral-esthetic point of view. In short, everything that in the aggregate is worthy of being called civilized socialist life.

The culture of reasonable consumption is first of all a problem of measure and harmony and of the optimal relation between the material and spiritual bases in people's lives. In other words, it is their relation to the totality of life's benefits in the broadest understanding of the word. Socially useful, creative activity, the mastery of cultural riches, physical and intellectual development, the opportunity for human contact--these are also benefits, which are by no means of second-rank significance in social practice.

The socialist system opens up broad opportunities to enjoy all reasonable benefits. An increase in the production of consumer goods and an increase in the public's monetary incomes lead to quantitative growth and qualitative improvement in the means of life. If we talk about nutrition, the proportion of high-quality products in the diet is increasing. In the period from 1950 to 1982 the population's per capita meat consumption increased 2.2-fold in the USSR, for milk and dairy products the increase was nearly 60 percent, consumption of eggs increased 4-fold, consumption of fish and fish products increased 2.6-fold, vegetable oil increased 3-fold, etc. At the same time bread and potato consumption declined noticeably.

The growth in the production of food products also increases the requirements for the culture of their consumption. Satisfying the needs for these products provides for a proper, sufficiently calorific diet with the appropriate nutrient content.

As for clothing, footwear and other items of individual consumption, it is more difficult to determine the quantitative need for them due to the diversity of range, fashion, tastes, etc. However, from this it does not follow that the given need cannot be fully satisfied. Of course, we are not talking about the use of dozens of suits or dresses or dozens of pairs of shoes; this kind of approach to consumer benefits reflects distorted, anti-social demands. In this area scientifically-based public health norms of consumption, differentiated according to sex, age, climatic and seasonal factors, are acquiring ever greater significance.

A rational approach to things, which is dictated by the reasonable needs of a cultured person, objectively determines that they be used in limited quantities. No one can wear more than one suit or pair of shoes at one time, no matter how enormous his wardrobe. And this applies in an even greater measure to the satisfaction of people's needs for items of long-term use--furniture, various everyday appliances, etc. A well-brought up person with common sense will not begin to buy several television sets, refrigerators and washing machines, and he will not turn his apartment into a warehouse of possessions.

And naturally even a complete abundance of various good-quality commodities must exclude excess and extravagance, which are alien to a society in which the people are themselves the masters. It is particularly unacceptable and unnatural when a person becomes a slave of things and of every kind of valuable, without becoming aware that in this way he is ravaging himself spiritually. And it is precisely here that the criteria of reasonableness and of the culture of consumption with regard to the fruits of human labor must manifest their effectiveness.

"...In order to enjoy a multitude of things, a man must be capable of using them, i.e., he must be to a great degree a cultured person," wrote the genius, K. Marx. And today, when we are gaining ever broader access to the diverse benefits of life, it is our duty to make skillful use of them as the means to the full, free, multi-faceted development and improvement of the individual.

The culture of intelligent consumption is social in nature. While trying to satisfy people's needs to the fullest degree possible and while improving the structure of those needs, our society "requires" that every need and the way to satisfy it must be in line with the moral values of the socialist way of life. From this it is obvious that an exclusively consumerist attitude toward benefits conflicts with the humanistic essence of our society. And the need for highly-productive labor must be the basis, the pivotal need of the Soviet person. After all, in our country labor is the main condition for the satisfaction of all needs, because it is in labor that man fully manifests his creative powers. For this reason, as Comrade Yu.V. Andropov emphasized at a meeting of the CPSU Central Committee with party veterans: "We must instill in our heirs an attitude toward life, in which the material benefits (and with time they should and will be greater) do not come to dominate a person, but serve to satisfy his highest needs. Only a person's spiritual wealth is truly unlimited. And although you cannot put it in a purse or hang it on the wall for the sake of prestige, we are for this kind of accumulation. It is the only thing which is worthy of a human being, of a Soviet person."

The problem of forming reasonable needs is not simple and its resolution requires a long time. As the means of life multiply, this problem is becoming a more and more important one on the agenda.

The implementation of ideological, political-indoctrination work in this direction must be increasingly subordinated to the work of helping people develop socially useful interests, reasonable needs and a high level of consciousness.

That is why, as the June CPSU Central Committee Plenum pointed out, it is now important to skillfully and consistently confirm in practice the Soviet way of life and the fundamental values of socialism; it is essential to support everything that is advanced in social practice and to clearly reveal that new quality of the working masses' life, a quality which includes collectivism and sociability, moral health and social optimism, the confidence of every person in the coming day and a high culture of labor, consumption, conduct and daily life. Success in indoctrination work is unthinkable without a consistent struggle for the strict observance of the socialist principle of distribution and the correct use of the public consumption funds.

The strengthening of socialist consciousness, as pointed out in the plenum decree, runs completely counter to the recidivism of petty bourgeois psychology and to the ideological influence of imperialist propaganda, which penetrates through various channels, on the consciousness of a certain segment of the population. It is essential to create a situation of intolerance toward such phenomena as the use of state and public property for purposes of personal enrichment; speculation; bribery and every kind of parasitism on the humanism of our system. In the struggle against them we look for consistent support to the activity of the masses and the irreversible strength of the law.

The raising of the masses' consciousness takes place under the influence not only of ideological-indoctrination measures but also of the entire structure of our socialist way of life. The revolutionary ideology and morals of the working class and its collectivist psychology, interests and views now determine the spiritual temper of a majority of Soviet people. It is characterized by ideological conviction, broad spiritual needs, and a high consciousness of public duty. These qualities of the working people in a socialist society are a reliable basis for the formation of their rational needs and interests and for the culture of reasonable consumption.

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